PROJECT W.A.R.: WOMEN ARISING RESTORED JOURNEYING FROM BROKENNESS TO WHOLENESS

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by

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United Theological Seminary, 2014

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ABSTRACT

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Debra Jean Hall
United Theological Seminary, May 2014

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Project W.A.R: Women Arising Restored Journeying From Brokenness to Wholeness addressed the emotional instability of women at Reeves Temple A.M.E. Zion Church. Brokenness emanates from abuse or life's circumstance. The end result is low self-esteem. The created solution was created curriculum that lasted six weeks with one hour ministry sessions. The prescribed course of action engaged the persons in journaling, scripture meditation, verbal interaction, imaging, and prayer. A pre survey and post survey was given to obtain the final results. The projected outcome was the participants gained a greater awareness of themselves, others, and renewed their relationship with God.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the many people involved in this project:

1. To the Reverend Dr.'s. J. Elvin Sadler and T. Anthony Spearman; thank you for your time, concern, and mentoring for this project. May God bless all the fruit of your labors.

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3. To my Professional Associate, Reverend Dr. Ernest Jefferies, pastor of Gethsemane Baptist through this process. Thank you for your wisdom and patience. You truly have an awesome calling of God in your life.

4. To the participants of Reeves Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church; thank you for your patience, honesty, and cooperation in this project. It was through your participation that this ministry model took life. I pray that God will continue to bless each of you.

DEDICATIONS

This project is dedicated to:

My daughter,
Ingra Barnwell

This project is offered in loving memory of my
Mother and Grandmother who are deceased.

Georgia Hill and Ruth Young

ABBREVIATIONS

NRSV	New Revised Standard Version

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

> [11] For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. [12] Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you, I will hear you. [13] When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, [14] I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.[1]

Reverend Debra Hall believes in her heart that God purposed her life even from her mother's womb. As disobedient as she was, and as broken as she has been, God still promised she would be productive not only as a women but as a child of God. Reverend Debra Hall cannot give the story of being born again at an early age, but she can testify as to how the Lord redeemed her just in time. She owes God her life, love, and devotion.

She was raised by her Mother and Grandmother along with three older brothers. Debra never knew the love of her father. None-the-less, her immediate family was closely knitted together. The home where she resided was small, but it never lacked love.

Debra was and still is a member of Clinton Tabernacle African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Every Sunday morning her Mother walked her to Sunday school.

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[1] Micheal Coogan, The New Oxford Annotated Bible, NRSV. Jeremiah 29:11.

Note: All Scripture taken from NRSV.

For some reason, the boys never had to go. That was alright because she enjoyed being with her friends. She believes because of earlier training in the church she was being prepared for ministry.

While in the church, she was part of the Buds of Promise children's choir. She always had a love for music and singing. From an early age the Lord blessed her with the gift to sing. Singing still is a major part of her ministry. During those developing years, she taught Sunday school along with being the Youth Class leader. She held other positions in the church. God allowed all her church activities and those who helped nurture her to be a stepping stone into ministry.

She received her call into ministry at the age of thirty. Reverend Debra Hall spoke with her senior pastor and on Mother's Day, 1989, she entered into the ministry of the Lord. Accepting the call into ministry was not an easy task. With thoughts of not being good enough, Debra wondered how God could use someone like her. Three years after going into ministry she received her first church. With the blessings of God, her Mother, the congregation, and her pastor, her life was never the same. God has been and continues to be faithful.

Tested and Tried

Debra married two months before going into ministry. She was excited about the union. Needless to say the marriage was disastrous. She was secretly being abused. At times she withdrew and few people noticed. No one knew, not even her family the trauma

she faced. To her, being in ministry meant everybody else needed help, but not her. None-the-less she continued in ministry, but not yet pastoring.

She went to her pastor and explained to him the cycle of abuse. It was realized at that moment he was not trained to handle abusive situations. After that she felt God could reverse this sacred call. Many times she felt like giving up, but the more she tried, the more God kept her. The marriage ended when she began to pastor the first church. She was broken, confused, felt abandoned by God, and her earthly love. The only feeling close to what she felt was a term known as han; deep seated wounds.[2] Not only that, she was left to raise a daughter alone. Even though she knew she accepted Christ as her Lord and Savior, at the time, no one could convince her God got glory from her agony. Nancy Leigh DeMoss suggested, . . .it all begins with brokenness and humility. No exceptions. No shortcuts, No substitutes."[3]

God always has a plan for those who love him. She was directed to a secular program for displaced homemakers. The program lasted eight weeks. The decision to attend it was not easy. Being in denial, the researcher felt others in the program had problems, just not her; after all she was a pastor. Her job consisted of helping others in need not herself. Three weeks into the program, she could no longer hold her emotions inside. The emotional release was the beginning of her breakthrough.

The program opened Debra's eyes to her deepest wounds. As time passed, she felt she had been given a second chance in life. The Displaced Homemakers program helped

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[2]Andrew Sung Park, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded,* (Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN., 2004), 35.

[3] Nancy Leigh DeMoss, *Brokenness, Surrender, Holiness: A Revive Our Hearts Trilogy*, (Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL., 2008), 23.

her focus on first loving herself then on furthering her education. As a result, Reverend Debra Hall received her first degree; an Associate of Arts from Catawba Valley Community College in Hickory, North Carolina. Afterwards, she attended Livingstone College in Salisbury, North Carolina. Feeling confident, Debra matriculated to Hood Theological Seminary, Salisbury, North Carolina. There she received her Master of Divinity. As God has blessed Debra she is now working on her Doctorate at United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio. The previous journey in her life helped birth her thesis project for ministry.

Ministry

In 1992 the author was ordained a Deacon in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Debra received her first pastorate; St. James African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Maiden, North Carolina. It was approximately twenty miles from her home. Needless to say she was surprised, frightened, and thankful. Reverend Hall was not given any information pertaining to the condition of the church. When she arrived at the appointment she found the congregation had experienced flawed leadership. The church was spiritually and emotionally despondent. Debra was not good at problem solving and neither had any prior training. Bringing the difficulties of the church under control was a challenge. Slowly the congregation began to turn around.

St. James had never been under the leadership of a female pastor in the church's existence; Debra was the first. Part of the problems in the beginning was not male oriented but female. Sometimes other females have trouble with like gender in leadership

positions. Again, once the congregants familiarized themselves with Debra there was a strong bond formed.

The researcher pastored another church, Humphrey's Chapel AME Zion Church, Dallas, North Carolina, with the same problem. Acceptance from this congregation was another milestone. The researcher was the first female pastor this congregation experienced in the seventy-five year history of this church's existence. It was difficult to tunnel through. After five years, Debra asked to be stationed closer to home. Again, the fight did not come from the men of the church, but the women.

Ministry Context

Reeves Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Davidson, North Carolina is the Debra's present context. She has been stationed there six years. The congregation is very loving and kind. The church does not have a large congregation, but they have big hearts. For the first time out of six churches, Debra feels like a pastor.

Reeves Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is located in Davidson, North Carolina. Davidson, North Carolina was founded in 1837 by The Concord Presbytery at the request of Reverend Robert Hall Morrison. It is named in honor of Brigadier General William Lee Davidson who was a local hero in the Revolutionary War in Mecklenburg County. His son donated the land in his honor.[4] Davidson consisted of small farms and was considered to be rural.

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[4] http://genealogytrails.com/ncar/mecklenburg/schools_davidsoncollege_history.html. April, 4, 2010.

Reeves Temple African Methodist Church began on Eden Street in Davidson, North Carolina in 1910. According to church records it has existed for over 100 years. The church itself split from an African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church named Torrence Chapel. Eventually, Reeves Temple was rebuilt in 1922. The church was built from bricks left over from a burned building on Davidson College Campus. Reeves Temple AME Zion Church remained on Eden Street until 1966 when the church purchased new properties. The property now resides on Watson Street in Davidson, North Carolina. According to the records, the members of Reeves Temple AME Zion Church marched from Eden Street to Watson Street on Easter Sunday morning and had their initial service in the newly purchased sanctuary.

The congregation at Reeves Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church has blessed this pastor in many ways. The attitude of the congregations inspires her to be the best pastor she can. In this ministry setting, Reverend Hall ministers to women who have experienced some of the same traumatic experiences as herself. Just knowing the depth of her personal struggles helps her extend hope to others facing similar dilemmas.

In the AME Zion denomination the pastors are only stationed twelve months per conference year. When, or if, the author is moved, both she and the congregation will be saddened. The Lord is allowing the church to accomplish much. Both the congregation and Debra have grown to love each other and work together for kingdom purposes.

Life Skills

While pastoring, Reverend Debra Hall had the opportunity to teach Life Skills at Mitchell Community College, Statesville, North Carolina. The program dealt with those who had lost jobs along with men and women released from prison. The judge directed ex-prisoners to her as part of their rehabilitation. She is not sure how teaching computer skills became a six week class for rehabilitation; none-the-less, the program worked.

The men and women exhibited difficult behavior in the beginning. There was a requirement in the class that everyone was to participate; no exceptions. Both men and women had to write about their traumatic life experience. As they wrote their emotions ranged from anger to tears. Most of them were reduced to tears. The class discussed their feelings. One of the major reasons for the break down, especially from the men, was abandonment by their fathers. Ninety percent of the men and women felt abandon and were acting out their emotions.

After the first breakthrough session, the students began to trust Debra. Several had guns and knives unknowingly in the class, but as a sign of surrender, they placed them on the tables for me to take. After six week sessions with the classes, Reverend Debra Hall was able to see a tremendous turn around in the behavior of those men and women. They were given certificates and a party after each six week session. Debra knew from those experiences that part of her ministry would be for those who are spiritually and emotionally oppressed.

Through her trajectory in life, the foundation was been set by God for ministering to women, who by heartrending circumstances have experienced brokenness. Emotional

stresses can surface at any given time. Women need to be assured that they are not alone. Issues are to be faced and not ignored. It is a fact that "issues affect intimacy with God."[5] The longer negativity germinates in the spirit of God's people, the more vulnerable people are to failure. That is why this project thesis is of major importance to Reverend Debra Hall.

After pastoring six churches, the author has seen women at their lowest. She did not understand why she was getting the most troubling congregations. Reverend Hall thought God was punishing her. In the midst of it all, God was carrying out his plan and purpose for her life. The Lord allowed her to experience firsthand how women settled for any relationship because they were uncomfortable with themselves. Seemingly, in every church women were fighting against each other without understanding the reason. As Debra observed the behavior of women she wondered what steps could be taken to provide avenues to ease the stresses that resulted from unresolved personal issues.

The Project

Project W.A.R. was implemented to help women understand their worth and importance to God and to themselves. The study was conducted at Reeves Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, in Davidson, North Carolina. These women had suffered emotional and physical trauma, whether from a significant other, or just life in general. These women carried unreleased emotions and were on a downward spiral.

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[5] Neil T. Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker: Overcoming Negative Thoughts, Irrational Feelings, Habitual Sins*, (Harvest House Publishing, Eugene, OR, (1990/1993/2000), 200.

The researcher met with five women of her context. The researcher gave an overview of the program to the women and five volunteered. The program consisted of six week one hour sessions. Each session had specific topics such as guilt, anger, and abuse. Each session had targeted scriptures and exercises. The program is designed to help women share their experiences and feel confident and safe in doing so. To insure this, each participant is asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement Form to protect the privacy of all who participated in the program. The researcher supplied each participant with a new Bible, notebook for journaling, and a pen.

At the beginning of the sessions the participants were given a pre-test. The test consisted of fifteen (15) statements. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure responses. The scale was based on a number system with the ranging from five to one; with five being the highest and one the lowest. The answer values are as follows; 5-Always, 4-Sometimes, 3-Slightly, 2-Almost Never, and 1-Never. Each participant was given identical test and asked to circle what best described them.

At the end of the sessions the participants were given a post-test; same test as the beginning to measure any significant changes in knowledge. The scores were added, separated, and broken into five categories containing three statements each. A sum total was given of each category. A mean score was then calculated for both the pre-test and post-test. The difference between the mean score for each participant was then calculated to determine a positive or negative change in knowledge.

The end result was to have increased knowledge about self, God, and others. Gained knowledge would help the participants obtain an increased level of self-esteem.

When persons love themselves everyone around them benefits. Loving others becomes easy when a person loves themselves. As the participants learn to increase self-love, they are able to deal with negative emotions that stem from low self-esteem such as anger, bitterness, forgiveness, and guilt.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN FEMINISM AND SELF-ESTEEM

The purpose of this literary review is to give relevance to information obtained from the readings of specific authors pertaining to the researchers Ministry Model: Project W.A.R.: Women Arising Restored, Journeying from Brokenness to Wholeness. The authors and their writings have contributed excellent insights into (1) the misogyny of women in antiquity and the influence of certain behavior in the 21st century and, (2) low self-esteem of women who are suffering from traumatic experiences and, (3) the rights of women from a feminist perspective.

Phyllis Trible

Phyllis Trible was born in Virginia. She is one of the world's most renowned feminist Biblical scholars. She is known for her work as a "biblical scholar and her rhetorical criticism."[1] She attended Meredith College for her B.A. degree and earned a Ph.D. from Union Seminary/Columbia University in 1963 in Old Testament Studies.[2]

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[1] *Jewish Women's Archive.* "Phyllis Trible." (Viewed on December 21, 2013) <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/author/trible-phyllis>.

[2] http://library.columbia.edu/locations/burke/archives/awts/exhibit/trible.html. (December 21, 2013).

Phyllis Trible has been a professor at Wake Forrest University, Andover-Newton, and was appointed Professor of Old Testament at Union Seminary.[3]

Phyllis Trible has authored works such as, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality, The Text of Terror.* These two books alone are "considered to be ground breaking works in feminist biblical scholarship."[4] She has won numerous awards for her writings and criticism of the misogyny of women in the Old Testament. Phyllis Trible's feminist thoughts have illuminated many readers to the abuse and unfair treatment of women. Her criticisms have forced society to take another look at Biblical texts that includes women and the impact this has for modern day society.

The Importance of Phyllis Trible's Writings

The researcher had not been introduced to the writings of Phyllis Trible prior to attending United Theological Seminary. The illumination from her writings has been astounding. The insight into Old Testament thought has increased the researcher's knowledge of rhetorical criticism; therefore, her writings have been major for the writing of this thesis project. Rhetorical criticism of her text puts one up close and personal with women in Old Testament narratives.

Rhetorical criticism is the examination of a text that prompts interaction between text, author, and audience. Human symbols are used to frame events and experiences, which is by relationship, association, or conversation; such as the relation between fire

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[3] Ibid.

[4] http://library.columbia.edu/locations/burke/archives/awts/exhibit/trible.html. (December 21, 2013).

and smoke. If a person sees smoke, fire is likely near.[5] While men are highlighted in all the stories in the Old Testament and the women are seen as unimportant, Phyllis Trible's writings entail the abuse, rape, and prejudices due to class, gender, and ethnicity. Yet, when women are mistreated at the hands of the men in their lives, some of the men continue on as heroes and nothing else is mentioned pertaining to the women they abused.

The researcher is examining the emotional state of women in this modern day society. The fact that women are broken due to ill treatment from their male counterparts and other tragic events that take place in their lives, Phyllis Trible's writings provide insight into the attitudes of antiquity and its influence in 21st century thinking.

In *Text of Terror,* Phyllis Trible lifts up four women from the Old Testament; Hagar, Tamar, unnamed women, and the daughter of Jephthah. The author helps readers to inspect the religious side of emotional conflict. The men were supposedly men of God; a prince, a brother, a father, and a husband, which the women in the text depended upon for protection. Instead these men were the abusers. In dealing with the abuse of women in Biblical text, "Some have speculated that traditionalist or patriarchal religious ideologies may legitimate, or at least fail to adequately condemn, the practice of partner violence.[6]

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[5] Sonja K. Foss, *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice, 4th ed.,* (Waveland Press, Inc., Long Grove, Ill., 2009), 4.

[6]Christopher G. Ellison, Jenny A. Trinitapoli, Kristin L. Anderson and Byron R. Johnson, doi: 10.1177/1077801207308259 "Violence Against Women", November 2007 vol. 13 no. 11 1094-1112, http://vaw.sagepub.com/content/13/11/1094.refs.html, accessed December 13, 2013.

Violence in any form should be condemned, but unfortunately in antiquity men made the rules. Now, laws have drastically changed; although, sometimes the actions of abusers have not.

In many situations women are powerless to protect themselves. Phyllis Trible magnifies a common thread for each female; being that their names were never spoken. The women were not acknowledged as having the authority or power to do anything else but what was allowed of them by their male counterparts. Phyllis Trible states, "Without her name, she lacks power."[7] Phyllis Trible makes this statement:

> Choice and chance inspire my telling these particular tales: Hearing a black women describe herself as a daughter of Hagar outside the covenant; seeing an abused women on the streets of New York with a sign, "My name is Tamar"; reading the news report of the dismembered body of a woman found in a trash can; attending worship services in memory of nameless women; and wrestling with the silence, absence, and opposition of God. All these experiences have led me to a land of terror from whose bourn no traveler returns unscarred.[8]

Dr. Trible, through this statement, defines a harsh reality of the situation of the women in Biblical Narratives and the comparison of women today. The pages of the text come alive as the readers are allowed to see the different scenes as they unfolded. The women were dealt disastrous hands, Hagar, lived in the desert, Tamar faced desolation because of a brother who would not accept no as an answer, and because her voice was silenced, shame became her best friend.[9] Shame is one of the many branches of brokenness. Dr.

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[7] Phyllis Trible, *Text of Terror: Literary-Feminist Reading of Biblical Narratives, Overtures to Biblical Theology,* (Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1984), 1.

[8] Ibid, 1.

[9] Ibid, 48.

Trible magnifies many aspects of oppression in Biblical narratives that would otherwise be overlooked.

Phyllis Trible dissects the Scriptures to find its meaning. She gives life to the characters of the text. A closer reading of the text enhances a better understanding. The researcher is in total agreement with this author that the truth cannot be hidden. When the text are being read, the readers must not continue to look at the surface of the writings, but travel with the characters, their hurts, abuses, desolation, and abandonment that so many women face today.

Since Phyllis Trible is a feminist theologian, she uses "feminist hermeneutics to get to the root of Biblical text. She deals with themes that are not the focus of most readings. Hermeneutics is an interpretation of the Bible or literary text.[10] Hermeneutics derives from the word *hermeneuto*; to explain, interpret, or translate.[11] Biblical understanding cannot be fully achieved without hermeneutics. "The feminist perspective is to bring women to the forefront of the narratives on grounds of sexual equality and equal rights.[12] Phyllis Trible does this in an excellent way. Both books, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality,* which is Phyllis Trible's first writing followed by, *Texts of Terror,* contribute excellent insight into both feminism and literary interpretations. Her works lifts up the women of narratives with interpretations of the Biblical texts itself. Because the researcher is dealing with the history of abuse and brokenness among women, Phyllis

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[10] Catherine Soanes and Angnes Stevenson, *Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 11th ed.,* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004).

[11] Henry A. Virkler and Karelynne Gerber Ayayo, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Process of Biblical Interpretation,* (Baker Book House Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1981, 2007), 16,

[12] Ibid.

Trible's authorship offers, detailed explanations into a world that helps readers understand the pain of women and their powerlessness during the patriarchal times. This information also gives insight into the mindset of some religions that are male oriented today. There are countries today where women have very little or no voice.

Through her writings, Dr. Trible continues her quest on feminism and faith. She suggests that Biblical narratives are interpreted a lot by culture, but the truth should always surface. As society continues to progress from patriarchal discrimination and alienation of females, males must remember men and women were created in God's image. Dr. Trible continues to investigate Biblical and literary text from not only a historical and societal point of view but that of rhetorical feminism. Her work is not based on race, creed, or color, but upon females. That is the basis of this thesis project because brokenness knows no boundaries. For that reason, the researcher did not utilize womanist theology.

Self-Esteem Statistics

One out of ten people suffer from depression and those most affected are women.[13] According to statistical studies by different psychotherapist it is believed that low self-esteem causes many negative effects in a person's life.

[13] Center for Disease Control and Prevention: http://www.cdc.gov/features/dsdepression December 2, 2013, 5:00 p.m.

Dr. Alexandra Delis-Abrams suggests that low self-esteem has been "linked to violent behavior, school dropout rates, teenage pregnancy, suicide, and low academic achievement."[14] Low self-esteem is one of the major causes of depression. It has been noted that 85% of Americans suffer from low self-esteem. The root cause is brokenness from pain, childhood events, hurt, and past rejection.[15] In the world of Psychology, depression is called, "common cold". [16]

Dr. Nathaniel Branden was born April 9, 1930, in Brampton, Ontario. In 1950 Dr. Branden began to study the self. Because of him, the study of self-esteem has become an important concept in society. He has written over twenty books on self-esteem.[17] These books include titles such as, *The Psychology of Self-Esteem, The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem, Honoring the Self, and A Woman's Self-Esteem: Struggles and Triumphs In the Search For Identity.* Dr. Branden founded the Nathaniel Branden Institute in 1958. Dr. Nathaniel Branden's literature is important to this research model because he is considered a pioneer on the study of self-esteem. While brokenness cannot be measured by scale, there are test that determine how high one values their personal self. His literature gives insights into the importance of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-respect; therefore, the researcher chose his literature because of his extensive study about the self.

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[14] Alexandra Delis-Abrams, Ph.D. http://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/Abrams1.html, December 2, 2013, 4:45 p.m.

[15] http://www.self-esteem-school.com/self-esteem-programs.html, December 2, 2013, 5:09 p.m.

[16] Mark R McMinn. Ph.D., *Cognitive Therapy Techniques in Christian Counselling: Resources for Christian Counseling,* (World Publishing, Dallas, 1993), 155.

[17] http://www.esteemedself.com/about-dr-nathaniel-branden/, retrieved December 2, 2013. Note: Note: This site was started and is still hosted by Dr. Branden himself.

Dr. Branden's concept of self-esteem is, "Of all the judgments that we pass in life, none is as important as the one we pass on ourselves, for that judgment touches the very center of our existence."[18] His statement caused the researcher to take another look at the scripture, "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he."[19] The researcher believes the concept of self-esteem had its beginning in the Bible. God declared it first and gave psychotherapist the ability to carry it further.

From reading Dr. Branden's series of literature; the researcher has come to believe that thinking has two positives; (1) if you think you can, you will, (2) if you think you cannot, then you will not. Dr. Branden, through his writings certainly brings truth to the researcher's personal statement. His literature is not about being overly confident and believing that one is all powerful but, he explains that having a healthy self-esteem can be life-changing.

Six Key Principles of Esteem

In four of Dr. Branden's books, there are set of principles called Six Pillars of Self-Esteem, which is also the title of the book that is the foundation for other literature he has written. These six pillars are;

- The Practice of Living Consciously
- The Practice of Self-Acceptance
- The Practice of Self-Responsibility

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[18] Nathaniel Branden, *Honoring the Self: Self Esteem and Personal Transformation,* (Bantam Books, New York, 1983) xi.

[19] Proverbs 23:7, The New King James Version Holy Bible.

- The Practice of Self-Assertiveness
- The Practice of Living Purposefully
- The Practice of Integrity

When women are experiencing brokenness due to issues such as relationships, abuse (whether sexual, physical, or mental), and abandonment, low self-esteem becomes a way of life. Women have a tendency to forget who they are, and forget self-importance. Because of feelings of insignificance, women start on a downward spiral. At the end of the day if help is not sought, self-esteem drops to dangerously low levels. Through these six pillars, self-esteem can be raised to healthy levels. Dr. Branden's writings also include a series of exercises for self-esteem building.

The Concept of Self-Esteem

Dr. Branden's compares low self-esteem to dwarfism. He suggests because of low self-esteem a person stops growing. One's thinking controls their behavior whether positive or negative. Low self-esteem causes negative actions and reactions. Dr. Branden ingeniously takes the reader on a journey from experiencing low self-esteem to higher levels of esteem. Regardless of what women go through, if their self-esteem is lost as a result of trauma, circumstances, or relational issues it becomes difficult to live according to Dr. Branden.

Women in the Biblical text such as Hagar, the unnamed women, and Jepthah's daughter, were powerless over their situations. Their lives were being controlled by other men and women. According to patriarchal customs they had to be submissive regardless

of the cost. In Hagar's story, self-esteem issues were evident. She was afraid, she ran, and was going to watch her child die because she could not provide for him or herself at that moment. She had to be subservient to her owners because after all, she was just a slave. No doubt in this age women are still finding themselves in compromising positions such as the like of these women. Women's rights have progressed far. Now, submissiveness is not so much the law as is the attitudes of some of the male gender.

It is evident according to Dr. Branden that a woman's value does not lie in someone else, but she determines her own worth. In God's eyes, women are just as important as men. It is crucial according to self-esteem psychotherapist such as Dr. Branden that women work their way out of low self-esteem to a balanced self-esteem to enjoy and appreciate all that life has to offer.

Self-esteem is a very valid part of life. Nothing good can be accomplished if a person's self-esteem has plummeted. For the researcher, she did not know that she did not understand how low self-esteem could affect everyday life. The author among other women will not fully understand the undercurrents of low or high self-esteem if they are not taught. The researcher agrees with one of Dr. Branden's principles of self-esteem, which is, regardless of what a person is confronted with in this life, one must never let someone else be the deciding factor as to how valuable they are. Dr. Branden's literature is appreciative in the eyes of the researcher for this truth alone.

Through Dr. Branden's writings he stresses the point of not allowing negative talk from others to determine who a person is or is to become. Again, the lives of the women

in the researcher's context had been built around what and who others said they were, even from childhood.

Dr. Branden challenges those who read his literature to let go of attitudes such as guilt, anger, fear, and shame. Owning up to personal feelings helps a person to face what is before them by helping to move past the problem. Some issues people have control over, but other issues such as death can be harder to release. The only feelings and actions people are responsible for are their own. Dr. Branden suggests that liberation from destructive thoughts is the key. For every chapter read, there are exercises that target specific attitudes. He challenges women to cope with their feelings. The researcher appreciates the thoroughness of Dr. Branden's writings.

Spiritual vs. Psychotherapy

The researcher needed to address brokenness from a spiritual approach. As with some authors, they feel the spiritual and the psychological should not be studied together. The researcher believes a person cannot be psychologically sound unless a person is spiritually sound. Therefore the researcher noted literature pertaining to the spiritual side of moving past brokenness into being fully whole.

The researcher was introduced to the literature of Dr. Jay E. Adams; Author and Counselor. Dr. Adams has written over 100 books on Christian counseling. He has proved from his literature that faith and psychological counseling should be integrated. Many psychotherapists believe there is no correlation between the church and good

counseling.[20] Dr. Adams literature, and authors like him are important to pastors who will possibly implement the researcher's project.

Authors such as Dale and Juanita Ryan approached brokenness and effects of low self-esteem from a spiritual point of view. In their literature they offered such titles as, *Recovery From Bitterness, Recovery From Fear, Recovery Distorted Images of Self.* Dale Ryan's literature, written along with his wife, Juanita Ryan, contributed excellent studies of Scripture pertaining to brokenness and to wholeness.

The researcher needed literature that pertained to the attitudes of those who were broken and abused. This literature is broken down into topics that deal with shame, bitterness, abuse, fear, loss, spiritual abuse, and dysfunctional families. Dr. Ryan's literature illuminated the scriptures and made it easier to grasp the concept of how God wants God's people to act and think. God's people are a people of grace. God is able to relate to humankind wherever one is in life.

Dr. Dale Ryan's literature and other literature with like content counteract a person's negative thoughts about God and themselves when self-esteem is low. One of Dr. Ryan's philosophical points of view is, "Regardless of the formal definition chosen for high self-esteem, there should be wide agreement that people should learn to think and feel about ourselves in ways that reflect the reality of God's grace."[21] Not all psychotherapists believe the church and high self-esteem correlate. Karl Barth also

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[20]Glendon L. Moriarty, Editor, *Integrating Faith and Psychology* (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill, 2010), 12.

[21] Ryan, Dale S. *"Self-esteem: An Operational Definition and Ethical Analysis."*(Journal of Psychology & Theology 11, no. 4 (December 1, 1983): 295-302. ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed January 2, 2014), 7.

suggested that self-love is unacceptable. Barth also suggested that high self-esteem went against the laws of God. The Bible emphasizes love to your neighbor and God, which is a selfless love. Karl Barth believes that when a person has high self-esteem they are not being true to God, therefore being considered ungodly. [22]

Dr. Ryan's literature allots many aspects to the importance of a balanced self-esteem and a Godly relationship. Both a positive self-esteem and relationship with God will put one on the right path from brokenness to wholeness. Literature such as Dr.'s Dale and Juanita Ryan breathe new concepts into self-love, abandonment of anger, guilt, abuse, and fear. Heightened knowledge of God brings better esteem to the self. Without this type of literature where the Bible and Psychotherapy meet, wholeness would just be a word instead of a state of being. Therefore, in the words of Eric L. Johnson:

> As we come to know God and ourselves we also come to understand more accurately our true value. We are drawn to see and assess things more as God does. And it is essential that we do so in order to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). Because God, the Creator of all things, is the author of all value, we must learn to see that all things have been given meaning and value by him.[23]

All literature used in this thesis project emphasizes information from a Biblical, historical, and theological aspect on brokenness. In order to encourage someone in a crucial stage of life, ministers must not take a narrow view and deal with the psychological and not the spiritual. No one can deal with women the way God can: for

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[22] Richard E. Burnette, *Karl Barth's Theological Exegesis: The Hermeneutical Principals of the Romerbrief Period,* (J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Sienbeck), Tubingen, Germany, 2001). This edition (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids), 212.

[23] Eric, Johnson, L. 1989. "Self-esteem In the Presence of God." *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 17, no. 3: 226-235. ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed January 2, 2014). 229.

in the deepest of hurts, God can be trusted. For every storm in life, God is a shelter. First, a person must come face to face with the problem, learn what God's word declares, then open their hearts and receive healing. The type of literature from these authors and others like them is imperative to this thesis project.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Biblical

(Genesis 16:21) gives the narrative of Abram, Sarai, and their handmaid; Hagar. God had promised Abram and Sarai an heir or son but the promise had not yet been fulfilled in Genesis 16. Sarai, in her desperation wanted to aide God in the process but created a whirlwind of trouble for herself, Abram, and Hagar. In moving ahead of God, Sarai was wrong in her proposal to her husband Abram that forced Hagar to become intimate with him but; Sarai felt justified. The text also captures Hagar as she transitioned from a slave girl to second wife or concubine to be abused and abandoned by the only family she had known. Not only that, but, she was imprisoned and oppressed by societal standards and laws that were against her womanhood.

The Problem

Complications began in (Genesis16:1), "Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children." Sarai was barren and could not have children. In Genesis 15 is written the account of God promising Abram a son. Sarai wondered how she would conceive seeing it was the Lord who caused her womb to be closed.

Women were not considered to be of high status in antiquity if they could not bear children. They were devalued and considered an embarrassment and a disgrace to their husbands. Not only that, but Sarai suffered personal disgrace.[1] Wives who had children were prized highly by their husbands. Sarai, therefore, became desperate to fulfill her duty as wife.

Sarai

"Sarai the Hebrew was married, rich, and free; she was also old and barren. Hagar the Egyptian was single, poor, and bonded; she was also young and fertile. Power belonged to Sarai, the subject of action; powerlessness marks Hagar, the object."[2] Problems arise when one person wants to use another person for their own self-gratification. In 21st century, unless a woman gives her child up for adoption, no one has the right to decide to take her child and raise it as their own. Unfortunately, for Hagar being a slave, she had to be submissive to her owner; Sarai.

The question then becomes how could laws be justified that gave another person the right to decide how a woman was to treat another woman's body? The women did not make the laws, it was the men. That particular law seemed to be for the gratification of the man for reasons of lineage. Phyllis Trible stated, "Sara's barrenness endangers the stability order, continuity, and predictability that genealogy promotes."[3] Sarai could have

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[1] William David Reyburn and Euan McG. Fry, *A Handbook on Genesis, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1998),* 348.

[2] Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives Overtures to Biblical Theology*, (Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1984), 10.

[3] Phyllis Trible and Letty M. Russell, *Hagar, Sarah, and Their Children: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives*, (Westminister John Know Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 2006), 34.

lost her position in the home if she had not borne her husband a son to carry on the family lineage.

Sarai could not blame anybody for her barrenness. God was the one who closed Sara's womb and until God decided to allow fertility, she should have been patient and waited for the promise of God. For in waiting, her troubles could have been avoided. Sarai refused to wait on God to make her womb fertile; therefore, Sarai did what the law allowed her to do. As the text is examined further, Sarai is going to blame Abram for her problems. Subsequently, she felt an injustice had been done to her through Hagar's attitude after Hagar becomes pregnant with Abram's child.

Hagar

One interesting part in the narrative was that God closed Sarai's womb, but (Genesis 16:3) states, "Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar, the Egyptian slave girl and gave her (*Hagar)* to her husband Abram as a wife." Notice the Narrative says "Sarai… took… and gave her to her husband…as a wife." It makes one wonder how persons can have rule over another human being and cause them to bend to the oppressors rule even if it is against the other person's will. Hagar did not have a choice. Nonetheless, societal law was on Sara's side.

Looking at the verbs 'took' and 'gave' gives a glimpse into the control the main wife had over the household. 'Took' in Hebrew is *laqach*, meaning to seize, snatch,

capture, or take away by force.[4] The term depicts Hagar being forced to lay with Abram. Sarai, the oppressor had the need to control Hagar's destiny or life to satisfy her own personal agenda. Hagar became the target of another person's weakness; such as Sarai's inability to have children. Sarai would never receive any punishment for her actions.

From the onset of the story the readers are given a major characteristic about Hagar and that is her identity as an "Egyptian slave-girl (Genesis)."[5] Her name means stranger in Hebrew. That seemed to be the case since she was captured from another country. In keeping with the narrative her name fits her situation for she was just that, a stranger. Because Hagar came from the Egyptians it brought another aspect to the story. Identification crisis and alienation becomes part of the problem. She would never be accepted according to tribal rites. Hagar's story represents modern day women who, regardless of ethnicity or race, experience exclusion and are despised by those around them. These women are, for whatever reason considered less valuable and are degraded. Everyone wants to be accepted. Acceptance should not be the result of what one has or does, but on the basis of their inner content.

Hagar was at a disadvantage to Sarai. By societal standards Sarai was from the upper class. She was considered a princess. Again, according to society Sarai herself would be looked down on because she was barren. A major concern to this particular narrative surfaces in the way modern day women perceive this information. Men were

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[4] W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White, Jr., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words,* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Camden, New York, 1946). 255.

[5] Denis T. Olson, *Commentary on the Book of Genesis: The New Interpreter's Bible, One Volume Commentary, (Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2010). 14.*

never to blame. Culturally, nobody blamed Abram. The only evidence that is present is the fact, according to Sarai, that God was responsible for closing her womb.

Hagar, was not asked what she wanted to do, but was chosen by a higher authority, namely Sarai. Some women have very little choice. Sarai's patience ran out and she became self-destructive. People take desperate measures in desperate situations. There are Sarai's of the world who cannot wait on the promises of God. It soon becomes evident that whoever stands in their paths may suffer. In her anger Sarai confronted her husband Abram. By this time Sarai blamed Abram for everything. If one is honest with themselves, sooner or later Sarai had to come face to face with her part in the whole scheme. People must learn to make better choices. There are times when a person just needs to wait on the promises of God. Again Sarai is a prime example of those women.

Abram's Position

God said to Abram, "I will make of thee a great nation and I will bless thee and make thy name great" (Genesis. 12:2). Abram knew what God said, but fell into his wife's wishes. Abram had many encounters with God but it seemed he trusted Sarai's judgment more than God. Genesis 16:2 declares "and Abram listened to the voice of Sarai."

Many times Abram's faith was tested but this time, God took him to the limit. Not only God promised him a son back in Chapter 12 but there was no sign of a child. Abram was getting old and Sarai's womb was still closed. Ten years passed and still no sign of the promised son. Somewhere between having faith in God and trying to keep peace in

the house, he lost sight of God's promise. James E. Smith suggested that, "Sarai's scheme was another test for Abram, and this test he flunked." [6] When one does not wait on the promises of God and are persuaded to seek other alternatives, trouble is likely to follow.

Genesis 16:4 states, "He went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress." Contempt comes from the Hebrew word *qalal,* to look at someone as unworthy.[7] The problem was not that the slave girl conceived, but seemingly the attitude Sarai experienced after the conception. Sarai received some backlash from her decision. She no longer felt in control of her situation and began to blame Abram. Sarai made two statements to Abram in Genesis 16; the first being, "May the wrong done to me be on you! (Gen. 16:5); and the second, "May the LORD judge between you and me!" Genesis 21 gives another account of Sarai manipulating the promise. K.A. Matthews suggest;

> The underlying point is the same: in Sarai's mind Abram is culpable for her pain, and she appeals to the Lord to "judge" (šāpaṭ) between them…Yet she admits that she gave the slave-woman to Abram, although he apparently did not request her. Her reaction would be illogical since the pregnancy achieved Sarai's purpose, but the slave's demeaning of her provoked regret and a cry for vindication.[8]

The whole point is Sarai is now having trouble accepting what she has done. Sarai feels Abram should take the blame.

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[6] James E. Smith, *The Pentateuch, 2nd ed., Old Testament Survey Series (*Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co., 1993), Gen 16:1-3.

[7] James Strong, L.L.D., S.T.D, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible,* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, 1984).

[8] K. A. Mathews, vol. 1B, Genesis 11:27–50:26, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005), 186.

Hagar experiences abandonment after Sarai refuses to blame herself for her own plot. Sarai started an enormous fire and forced Abram to respond to her wishes by sending Hagar away. Abram responded by saying "Your slave-girl is in your power; do to her as you please" (Genesis 16:6). Abram certainly could have taken a stand. Yet, that was not the case. According to Bruce Vawter's, *On Genesis*, the author believes Abram had to side with Sarai and return authority back to her. Because of that choice, "Sarai dealt harshly with her (Hagar) and she ran away (Genesis 16:6)."

The story image portrays one who has been wounded very deeply. The Hebrew word for harshly is *anah* which carries the meaning to afflict, do violence, violate, or weaken.[9] It also means to be unpleasantly rough and jarring. Hagar, being exasperated in spirit, was forced to run away.

Sarai was restricted in her actions toward Hagar therefore she treated her inhumanly and forced her out. How many women are forced out of the only place they know as home because of domestic violence, divorce or sexual abuse? Women have to find a place of protection or peace during ill-treatment. Many modern day Hagar's are still fleeing for their lives.

Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-18 gives an account of Sarai facing similar circumstances because of her husband Abram. Abram and Sarai were entering into Egypt. According to Scripture, Sarai was a beautiful woman. Abram was afraid for his life because of her beauty. It was her beauty that would attract the king and ultimately get Abram killed. With Abram knowing this, his words to Sarai were,

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[9] James Strong, L.L.D., S.T.D, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, 1984).

> . . . I know what a beautiful woman you are. When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife." Then they will kill me but will let you live. Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you. (Gen. 12:10-13)

Sarai had to lie to protect her husband so his life could be spared. Not only was his life spared, but he received riches in the process. Because of Abram forcing his wife to lie, the king took her for his wife. Abram lived life abundantly. He received many gifts because of Sarai. Sarai loved Abram enough to lie for him to spare his life even to the point of giving herself to another man against her will. Imagine Sarai seeing the man she loved every day from the palace window. She could not embrace Abram in any way. This came about because she was obedient to her husband's wishes; to lie. That probably caused Sarai much heartache.

The narrative does not give a time span of the marriage of Sarai to the king. One could say Abram was telling the king the same thing he told Sarai to do to Hagar, "Your slave-girl is in your power; do to her as you please." (Genesis 16:6) He was just talking to a different person not about the slave Hagar, but his wife Sarai. The same way Sarai made life miserable for Hagar, by the same token her own husband made life miserable for her. Yet, as a result of that occurrence in Sarai's life, she could have been more sympathetic towards Hagar.

Newsome and Ringe raise another issue. That issue is the fact that "Abram slept with Hagar but did not care about her."[10] Sarai's true feelings surfaced and she told Abram "I gave my slave-girl to your embrace . . ." The word embrace emphasizes

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[10] Carol A. Newsome and Sharon H. Ringe, *Women's Bible Commentary With Apocrypha*, (Louisville, KY, John Knox Press, 1998), 18-21.

holding someone close in the arms. The text never suggested that he loved her. The narrative seemingly suggests his not caring exposed Hagar to extremely dangerous circumstances. It is in times such as Hagar was subjected that women are extremely vulnerable. Abram, complying with his wife to keep peace in the home, exposed the slave girl to conditions unknown to her as well. James E. Smith submits that Abram would have gone against the law if he drove Hagar out. [11]Abram, therefore, turned authority back to Sarai to do what pleased her.

Hagar's Redemption

Twice Hagar found herself in a deserted place (Genesis 16:7; 19:10). The first time out of fear and the second time, she was sent away. Genesis 16:7 lets the readers know that because of Sarai's attitude, Hagar was violated, spoken down to, and afflicted by her mistress. She was forced to run for her life. According to the law, since Hagar was a slave given to Abram, she could not be resold. Sarai's strategy was to make Hagar's life unbearable so that Hagar would not be ousted but, force to run. Therefore, (Genesis 16:6) declares ". . . she ran away from her." Probably in Hagar's mind she felt alone and abandoned by the only family she knew after being taken from her homeland as a slave. This part of narrative gives important information about Hagar's present position. The wilderness was a place with little or no water. Yet, Genesis 17 reads, "The angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur." Hagar was subjected to the natural elements of nature trying to find her way back to

[11] James E. Smith, *The Pentateuch, 2nd ed.,* Old Testament Survey Series (Joplin, MO; College Press Pub. Co., 1993), Gen 21:9-21.

familiar territory. Hagar's life at this point seemed to be unstable. She was probably feeling broken, abused, and abandoned by the mistress she was forced to help. No doubt she was saddened and confused by her circumstance. Hagar did not call on the Lord, but, the Angel of the Lord showed up.

The story gives the sense of Hagar being so involved in finding the path home that she never called on Abram's God. Regardless of whether she called on God or not, "The angel of the Lord found her (*Hagar*). . ." She was alone and on her way to Shur, trying to find some familiar ground of acceptance and safety. Hagar was questioned by the Angel of God, "And he said, "Hagar, slave-girl of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am running away from my mistress Sarai (Genesis 16:8)." Notice the Angel of the Lord already knew her name and, no doubt knew where she was going. Toba Spitzer, who wrote for *The Reconstructionist,* seems to think the angel was letting Hagar know she was out of place away from Sarai, her mistress and in the dessert.[12] Sarai was the reason Hagar ran. Instead of staying there and accepting the ill treatment, she fled. Toba Spitz suggests that Hagar's fleeing was a "willingness to stand up for herself, a sense of boldness and determination."[13] She ran but God was ready to rescue Hagar where she was. Some commentators suggest God was trying to remind Hagar of her sin of being intimate with Abram. That would be highly unlikely since Hagar was given to Abram by his wife, Sarai. It sounds more that the

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[12] Toba Spitzer: 1998. *The Reconstructionist* 63 no. 1 Fall 1998. Other Matter." Reconstructionist 63, no. 1: ATLASerials, Religion Collection, EBSCOhost (accessed December 5, 2013), 9.

[13] Ibid, 9.

Angel of the Lord was to assure her of God's plan for her in spite of Sarai. Jeremiah 29:11 lets readers know God has plans for God's children.

When Hagar stopped, the angel spoke and told her to return. Some women reading this one verse will question that if God loved Hagar so much why would God send her back to an abusive situation? This stage in the narrative is very mind boggling. Men could use this verse to lure their wives or significant others back for continued abuse. Feminist see this as bad advice to Hagar. Why go back to an abusive situation? The argument could be extremely legitimate. However, in spite of a horrible situation, God was still with her. God assured her of her purpose which was to have the child. All of God's children have a destiny. One may have to go through many desert experiences and meet God by a spiritual well to find out what God is saying. Victory can be the end result.

In this case Hagar was to go back to Sarai with child and be obedient to her but not without a promise. The promise: (16:10b) "I will so greatly multiply your offspring that they cannot be counted for multitude." This promise can be compared to the promise God gave Abram in (Genesis 13:16), "I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth; so that if one can count the dust of the earth; your offspring also can be counted." God did not leave her without a promise. Abram and Sarai decided not to wait on the fulfillment of their promise from the Lord, but Hagar had no choice. Hagar was assured of God's providences and returned without question to her mistress.

The second time Hagar was sent away was after the birth of Ismael.

> But Sarai saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abram, playing with her son Isaac. So she said to Abram, "Cast out this

> slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac." The matter was very distressing to Abram on account of his son. But God said to Abram, "Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarai says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named for you." (Genesis 21:9-12).

Life for Hagar seemed bad enough while she was pregnant. After the birth of Ismael, Sarai wanted Hagar gone again. Sara "took and gave" the Egyptian slave to her husband, but now Hagar the surrogate and the child had to leave. Sarai no longer had need of her. Again Hagar was used and thrown away. This time Abram sent Hagar away. The Scripture described him as being "distressed" or sorrowful (v-11). Abram knew the dangers of being alone in a wilderness where she would be subjected to drought and potential death. Abram was being obedient to Sarai and God. Regardless of what this part in the story looked like, again, God had a plan. At times some situations can be overwhelming even for some men. God steps in and assures Abram of the promise for Ishmael. Nevertheless, the Hagar's of society are still caught in the middle.

Hagar became the first woman to name God and it was the same God that spoke and fulfilled a prophecy through her. Scripture reads, "So she named the Lord who spoke to her, "You are El-roi"; for she said, "Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?"

For the last time, Hagar found herself back in a wilderness position. "Abram took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness. . . (Genesis 21:14)." Not only did she have the child but, she had to carry water and food on her shoulders. She carried the child for nine months only to be abandoned while pregnant.

Then the Lord sent her back to be sent away again and this time with a load on her shoulders and a child at her side. Hagar represents many women today that feel their load is too heavy and what is not carried on the shoulders is carried at their side? Women who are broken feel as though there is no one which to share their problems. Therefore, they continue to haul them wherever they go.

According to (Genesis 21:15-16) the food and water were depleted. She was not familiar with Paul (II Corinthians 12:9) when he said "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." Now she had no home, she was alone, abandoned, and no necessities for survival. To add insult to injury she had a hungry crying child and both were waiting to die. From her first encounter with the Lord, maybe consciously Hagar knew God would come through. Somewhere inside her brokenness she found the strength to call on the Lord. "She lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven." That statement is one of the most profound statements in this narrative. God called to Hagar from heaven. God knew her name, her situation, and blessed her in spite of Sarai. In the narrative that is the first time it is mentioned that someone called Hagar by her name. Up until this point she was just the slave girl.

"While the reader is immediately informed that the one meeting Hagar is of divine origin, Hagar is also given a clue, for this stranger knows her name and station in life; he addresses her as "Hagar, handmaid (*shifhah)* of Sarai."[14] *Shifhah* in Hebrew is

[14] Toba Spitzer: 1998. The Reconstructionist 63 no. 1 Fall 1998. Other Matter." *Reconstructionist 63, no. 1: ATLASerials, Religion Collection,* EBSCOhost (accessed December 5, 2013).

defined as slave or maid."[15] Those who are broken must never underestimate God knowing where they are in life. If no one else values a person enough to acknowledge their presence, God does. The Lord is no respecter of persons.

The end result is, "God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water (Genesis 21:19)." Hagar had to find the strength to hold on to God, the heart to trust God, the eyes to see God, and open ears to hear God in the worst of times. Kay Porterfield states that those that are hurt must make "a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God."[16] God wants to take a person's will and make it God's own. In doing so, God's promises are manifested in the lives of those who will trust and believe. The Lord is able to take the brokenness of the abused and oppressed and make them whole again. God kept her word to Abram, Sarai, and Hagar and blessed Ishmael as well as Isaac. The saga of Hagar is to encourage women that experience hurt; abuse, abandonment, and brokenness realize that places are not problems with God. God can allow water to flow, flowers to blossom, and trees to grow even in the wilderness. The Scriptures makes it very clear that with God everything is possible.

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[15] Rabbi Michael Katz and Gerson Schwartz, *Searching For Meaning in Midrash: Lessons for Everyday Living*, (Jewish Publications Society, Philadelphia, PA). 54.

[16] Kay Porterfield, *Violent Voices, 12 Steps to Freedom From Emotional Abuse and Verbal Abuse*, (Health Communications, Deerfield beach, 1989). 47.

New Testament: The Woman at the Well
The Context: Samaria

John 4:1-42 hosts a similar narrative to that of Hagar. It is the story of the woman at the well. It is a narrative of how Jesus took a woman oppressed by sin, shame, loneliness, and rejection, showed her grace, and put her on a path to complete wholeness.

Jesus was on his way back to Galilee "But he had to go through Samaria."(John 4:4)" Reading the Pericope one would think Jesus' only reason for going through Samaria was because of being tired and thirsty. This is rather intriguing to the writer because Jesus could have caused water to flow from anything or anywhere. But, Jesus journeyed to a place of opposition to the Jews, through Samaria to Jacob's well. Samaria was a place where there were "prejudices based on class, race, and gender."[17] Barclay Newman suggests that "the verb *had to* . . . denote divine necessity."[18]

Samaria played host to a people; Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman who were "widely viewed as flawed and even heterodox (represented by the Samaritans, 4:1ff.)."[19] Jesus, being a Jew was not to have any dealings with Samaritans regardless of gender.

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[17] Teresa Okure. 2009. "Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (John 4:1-42) in Africa", Theological Studies 70 No. 2:401-408. AtlasSerial Religion Collection, Ebsco Host, (Accessed November 29, 2013), 403.

[18] Newman, Barclay Moon and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the Gospel of John,* UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 109.

[19] D. A. Carson, The Gospel According to John, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 215.

"This behavior was unlawful according to customs. On the part of the Jews Σαμαρίτης is used as a term of bitter contempt, Jn. 8:48."[20] The Samaritans were considered to be Gentiles and unclean.[21] According to the rules of that period any Jew who dealt with the Samaritans were considered unclean as well.

After the Assyrians captured Samaria in 722–721 BC, they deported all the Israelites of substance and settled the land with foreigners, who intermarried with the surviving Israelites and adhered to some form of their ancient religion (2 Ki. 17–1).[22] Therefore, Jesus would be considered by the leaders to be unclean. The Disciples had the same attitude as the Pharisees. They asked Jesus (John 4:27), "…Why are you speaking with her?" Not only was it unlawful for Jesus to speak with a Jew, but to add insult to injury it was a Samaritan woman. Jesus himself knew what it felt like to be rejected. According to Scripture, Jesus was rejected in his own country of Nazareth (Mark 6:1-6). Jesus made statements in the New Testament that whoever came to him that he would never cast them out. Jesus is showing that he is true to his word.

The disciples, who were supposed to be followers of Jesus, missed the Master's heart and purpose. They forgot how Jesus found them and invited them to follow him in spite of their past. How soon people forget grace. Anne Clifford, a Feminist Theologian states:

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[20] Vol. 7, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittle, Geoffrey W. Brimley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 91.

[21] Ibid, 92.

[22] D. A. Carson, The Gospel According to John, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 216.

> While proclaiming God's message, Jesus gathered followers, not only men but also women, from all parts of society, to form a community with a mission. He modeled that patriarchal behavior was not of God. He welcomed marginal people among his disciples: the landless poor, outcast, and sinners. His was an inclusive community in which the first would be counted last and in which those who desired to be first would give service to others."[23]

For every follower of Christ that should be the attitude of the church. No one should be turned away or looked down upon.

The Place of the Encounter

Thirst caused Jesus to stop in Sychar, the place of Jacob's well, but ministry kept Jesus there. The place of the encounter was a well. In Hagar's story she too was met at the well by the Lord. She met God not once but twice in the same place. What is the significance of the well? John McArthur gives insight Jacob's well. He states this was the first piece of land that Jacob purchased and built and altar to God (Gen. 33:18-19).[24] Jacob also named the field "El Elohe Israel; the God of Israel." (Gen. 33:20)."[25] Jesus went by this well knowing he was going to encounter a woman who needed spiritual life. Since the well represents life, who better to meet the woman there but Jesus?

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[23] Anne Clifford, *Introducing Feminist Theology*, (Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 2001), 134.

[24] John McArthur, *Twelve Extra Ordinary Women: How God Shaped Women of the Bible and What He Wants To Do With You*, (Thomas Nelson, Nashville, Tn., 2005) 141.

[25] Ibid, 142.

The Woman

While Jesus was there resting "A Samaritan woman came to draw water (John 4:7)." According to H.D.M. Spence-Jones, she showed her status by what she did. No woman that was of any importance drew water and carried it. [26] Jesus asks for a drink of water and the conversation begins. It is worth noting that the status which society labeled her, she believed it, and acted accordingly. She did not understand how Jesus could ask her for water knowing who she was; a Samaritan and a woman.

In order to understand the story one must understand the social status of the day. Again, Samaritans were despised by the Jews. She was "without rank or status."[27] It was unethical for anyone to converse with someone of her position. "The Rabbis saw the Samaritan women as menstruous from birth, that is perpetually unclean and a permanent source of uncleanness for their community."[28] Even the disciples wondered why Jesus was talking to a woman of such caliber. After all, Jesus was a man and also a Jew. Seemingly, this could not have been a more awkward situation for Jesus.

The woman's life was full of disorder and confusion. Her failure was evident because of multiple husbands as she had, five to be exact. The man she was co-habitating with was not her husband. In the eyes of society she was an adulteress. Men in that period

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[26]St. John Vol. I, ed. H. D. M. Spence-Jones, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnall's Company, 1909), 163.

[27]Beverly Roberts Gaventa and David Peterson, Interpreted by Dorothy Ann Lee, The New Interpreter's Bible: One Volume commentary, (Abingdon Press Nashville, 2010). 717.

[28] Teresa Okure. "Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (John 4:1- 42) in Africa." *Theological Studies 70, no. 2* (June 1, 2009): 401-418. ATLASerials, Religion Collection, EBSCOhost (accessed November 29, 2013)

could have more than one wife (concubine), but it was uncommon for women to have more than one husband. In Jewish tradition women were permitted three husbands. With that law being in place, the Samaritan women still failed because she had five husbands and was now living with a man she was not wedded too.[29]

She was aware of her condition and so was everyone else. This unnamed woman only felt comfortable showing up when no one else was present. Dr. Jill Murray dedicated a complete chapter in her book on the results of feeling shameful. Part of her explanation is to let women know that "in times when shame becomes intense and life is overwhelming, know that shame is not an identity; it is a state of mind that cradles loneliness, depression, and feelings of failure."[30] The woman at the well felt as if she was a failure and her actions proved it.

Only men could divorce the women but it could not be vise-versa. However, this unnamed woman partially was responsible. She could not help being a Samaritan but, she could have controlled her habits. But none-the-less, she suffered as a result. Brokenness is not concerned with its source nor does it have respecter of persons. She was alone, and not expecting anyone to be there for her. Nothing could have prepared her for the life changing experience she received.

The beautiful part of this scenario is Jesus breaks all barriers. Christ not only spoke to the Samaritan woman, but spoke to her spiritual needs as well. Both Hagar and

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[29] Gerald L. Borchert, vol. 25A, *John 1-11,* The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 205.

[30] Dr. Jill Murray, Destructive Relationships: *A Guide to Changing the Unhealthy Relationships In Your Life*, (Jodere Group, Sandiego, 2002), 175-194.

the woman at the well needed something from God. They needed water to sustain life. Both women were lonely and at the mercy of a male dominated society. Jesus allowed women to touch him, speak to him, and spread the Word that Jesus was Lord.

Jesus was not just a man, but God's Son who came to rescue those who are broken. Jesus touched dead women, and allowed a woman with an issue of blood to touch the hem of his garment. He brought little girls back to life. Jesus never worried about gender or social status. Societal prejudices causes people to look away when it comes to the needs of others. The Son of God comes down to his people just as he did the Samaritan woman, not to condemn her but to meet her where she was. It was Jesus' intent to "get her in a position to ask" so she would "be open to receive."[31] The church has to learn to look the marginalized in the eye, listen to their voices, and feel their hurts. Compassion will never be a gender issue with Christ. Christ wants all to be saved and set free. Jesus' agenda was to touch and make whole all who wanted to be.

There is a relation to the hurt, the Lord has felt the brokenness of those who have been wounded and abandoned. Hagar, being afflicted by Sarai, being mistreated by societal demands, and abandoned, had God's understanding. When women, such as the woman at the well, try to shield themselves from hurt they must realize there is a place of peace in God. Andrew Comiskey quoted a statement from Emily Dickenson that says, "When Jesus tells us about his Father, we distrust him, when he shows us his home, we

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[31] Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Gospel of John Commentary*, Wm. B. Eerdman Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2012), 257.

turn away, but when he confides to us that he is "acquainted with grief, we listen, for that also is an acquaintance of our own."[32]

When people know and believe that Jesus has experienced grief, sorrow, or better yet, brokenness, they are more likely to allow the Holy Spirit to minister to their needs. To be sympathetic means a person cares, but empathy means a person has been acquainted with whatever the other person is facing. "Affirmation takes place following brokenness. Jesus could not be released for ministry until He was broken . . . It was at then that God affirmed Jesus' Sonship and empowerment by the Holy Spirit to minister."[33]

Theological

According to the Miriam-Webster Dictionary, theology is "a body of doctrines concerning God, including His attributes and relations with man; especially, such a body of doctrines as set forth by a particular church or group."[34] This paper is not being written in order to examine God's stance on love of and for God's creation but how males have selfishly divided roles between genders. It will point to areas of sexism and dualistic thinking in the minds of those during the patriarchal period that would allow brutal treatment of women and yet never suffer negative consequences; sometimes being

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[32]Andrew Comisky, *Strength In Weakness: Healing Sexual and Relational Brokenness*, (Downer Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2003), 121.

[33] Tunde Bolanta, *Spiritual Brokenness: The Key to Becoming More Like Christ*, (Creation House Books, Lake Mary, Fl., 2001.), 4.

[34] *The New Illustrated Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus of Synonyms & Antonyms, Encyclopedia Edition*, (F.G. Gerguson Publishing, Chicago, Illinois, 1992). 1001.

praised. Those reading the narratives of women abused in the Bible would begin to wonder if God were present and if so where was God? Is patriarchal thinking still prevalent in this modern day society?

Phyllis Trible, in a recent article suggest: "domestic violence is a consequence of patriarchy, and part of a systematic attempt to maintain male dominance in the home and in society."[35] Genesis gives the account of creation. From the very beginning humans have misconstrued God's intentions for humankind especially when it comes to domination. The story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2 gives the account of God created everything and called it *good.* The only thing God made mention that was not good is that man was alone.

Rosemary Radford Ruether, in her book, *Women and Redemption: A Theological History;* raises questions of women and creation. Her argument is that women are made in the image of God. This again deals with gender identification. The church has for years used the Bible to justify differentiating between male and female. Women have been denied the right to move within the Christian church, especially in the Catholic Church. Reuther deals with some very controversial issues. From a female perspective she is right in her thinking. The church is full of bad thinking and misconceptions about what scripture says about the role of women in the church.

Women experience prejudices all around. On one hand are the race and class prejudices, now the church has taken its' seat too in religious prejudices. Rosemary

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[35] Nicole Knickmeyer, Heidi M. Levitt, Sharon G. Horne, et al, "Responding To Mixed Messages and Double Binds: Religious Oriented Copping Strategies of Christian Battered Women" *Journal of Religion and Abuse* 5(2003) 30.

Ruether questions the fact of men and women being equal in God. It was and still is a legitimate argument. To differentiate between men and women in the church is to make the scriptures untrue. Galatians 3:28 reads, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." If this is true, and the church must believe it is, then why are gender prejudices still evident within the church?

According to scripture, women were supposed to cover their heads in church. They were supposed to be silent and not teach. There are still churches in today's society that believe women still are not allowed to speak until spoken to. Society then was male dominated. Women did not have much value or worth. They basically had one role and that was procreation for lineage purposes. Today, according to Reuther the Quakers still entertain the same biblical law. The Quakers "affirmed a complete original equality and condemned woman's subordination as sinful domination."[36]

Biblical stories that indicate how men treated their wives and concubines inspire a need for liberation of women. Therefore, theologians begin to come up with different kinds of theology to support personal beliefs. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Feminist Theology rest on this belief:

> "The central issue for feminist theology is the unease within the Christian tradition about associations of the female or feminine with the godlike. Feminist theologians (men as well as women) argue that the female/feminine can image God in as full (and as limited) a way as God is imaged by the male/masculine. Since it is agreed that God transcends both

[36] Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women and Redemption: A Theological History,* (Fortress Press, 1998), 279.

> sex and gender, feminist theologians urge the need for a humanly inclusive theology, the 'envisioning' of God in a gender-inclusive way…"[37]

Biblical evidence demonstrates that the Patriarchs had control over their homes and their women. Women were at their mercy of the patriarchs, even to the point of abuse or death. Feminist Theology is serving a main purpose for this thesis by illuminating stories that cover up the abusive acts of men towards women. Feminist Theologians allow readers to see beyond the surface writing and expose core details to reveal biblical truths.

Creation Account

"So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." One of the points Phyllis Trible makes in Feminist Theology comes from this verse alone. This statement alone seems to be one of the most controversial verses in the Bible dealing with male and female differences. The text clearly says God created humankind equally. Phyllis Trible states "male and female' correspond structurally to "the image of God."[38] The statement is referencing to male and female anatomical features of God. She continues to explain that when God spoke in the beginning God said "humankind . . . male and female . . . them." Both were made in the image of God. It is agreed upon by many scholars the only referencing here is the difference in sexuality. The verses following explain why God separated the two sexually and it was for procreation, not so the male would have rule over the female.

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[37]F. L. Cross & E. A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 3rd Ed. Rev.,* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2005), 601.

[38] Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality,* (Fortress Press, Philadelphia, PA, 1978), 17.

Society has gotten away from reading the Biblical text for truth as opposed to reading it and gearing the meaning towards personal truth. Feminist Theology looks at Biblical truth without male domination but on the grounds of equality. K. A. Matthews states that, "Genesis tells who is created in the "image of God," both man and woman . . . it does not describe the contents of the "image." This passage focuses on the consequence of that creative act, which is humanity's rule over the terrestrial world of life."[39] It is self-explanatory that God did not make woman to be less than man but to be equal and have dominion together over the earth. There is no sign of one being superior over the other.

In the Patriarchal society this truth was taken out of context and used to mean more than just sexual differentiation to stronger words of male superiority and forced female subordination. God said "them" not him, therefore, there is equality expressed in Genesis 1 and not for one to rule over the other but uniqueness in function.

The push in our society to denote superiority is not as important to God as it is to males to boost their own egos. That is why Feminist Theology is important in this modern day society. Black Feminist Theology and Womanist Theology are based on ethnicity instead of just the woman. It is a fact that struggles for African American women have been more severe than that of the white female. When Feminism started it began with the white females fighting for their own rights to vote and self- identification. As the Feminist wave continued, someone needed to speak up for the African American Female. All females need to be assured of their position in Christ and in modern day society. Genesis 1:27 speaks volumes about God's transcendence. God is neither male

[39] K.A. Matthews, *The New American Commentary, Vol. 1A, Genesis 1-11:26,* (Broadman & Holman Publishers, Nashville, 1996), 164.

nor female. Even though the Bible is gender exclusive there is no proof that God is male or female as humanity understands it. God has no beginning because God always has been. Throughout the Bible God is referred to as Spirit.

Women were recognized as mere property rather than humans or "help meet." John H. Sailhamer, who is the exegetical author of Genesis in the Expositor's Bible Commentary, explains the Hebrew portion of what God meant to be a help meet. According to Genesis God never intended for man to live by himself. Everyday man saw animals but nothing that looked like him. Help meet is the Hebrew word עזר (`ezer). It means "one who helps or succors."[40] Therefore, it can be concluded that woman is just as important as man in the sense of gender. Since woman was pulled from the rib of man she is destined to be a part of him not apart from him. Just the reading of the Genesis narrative itself never alludes that God thought less of the woman than of man because they both were held accountable for the fall. God had definite intentions as to whom He wanted this person for Adam to be like. Adam was put to sleep and woman was pulled from his rib. This was so amazing to Adam he declared to the women "you are now flesh of my flesh and bone of my bones." God pulled her from Adams rib. It is interesting how the narrative was turned around in patriarchal times to exalt masculinity, oppress and dehumanize women.

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[40] Frank E. Gaebelin, General Editor, John H. Sailhamer: *Genesis, The Expositor's Bible Commentary with The New International Version, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Volume. 2. (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1990). 46-47.*

Images and Metaphors

Renita J. Weems and Phyllis Trible also deal with the images and metaphor aspects of abuse in patriarchal society. The imagery and metaphoric descriptions of women and sexuality in the Old Testament have vast amounts of negative overtones. Renita Weems calls it "political anarchy and religious idolatry."[41] Israel, who is portrayed as the wife of God, was shown through many images by the prophets to be the wife that cannot be trusted. One minute she (Israel) is faithful and the next minute "they whored after gods" according to (Judges 2:17). The New International Version uses the word prostitute instead of whored. There are no negative connotations about male behavior, but all negative connotations are about women.

Is it possible for women who have been abused, raped, abandoned, and marginalized to have a good first impression of the scriptures if they are looking for comfort from the Father? If the males are always portrayed as the more dominant beings, there is no wonder our society has continued to have the mindset that the perfect job for the women is to cook, clean, and conceive. The prophets gave vivid images according to Israel's behavior using sexually, explicit, provocative, and lurid images of the woman/wife Israel.

In (Judges 1:2) God gave command; let the men take lead. Men started out exactly as God intended, which was to take the lead in the battles. As the story continues men only begin to obtain partial victories because they disobeyed God, (Judges 2:4).

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[41] Renita J. Weems, *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets*, (Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1995) 1.

Israel began to worship Canaanite gods. For Israel this was common practice. Inspire of God's continued deliverance, Israel still fell short. Deborah was a prophetess and a wife, led Israel in the battle. She tried to convince Barak to go to Mount Tabor and fight, but he would not go unless Deborah accompanied him. This does not show a weak woman, but one of courage. Victory was given to Debra and it was Jael that took the life of Sisera. The celebration was not for the men that fought the battle, but the two women who won the battle. Deborah was considered the "motherly protector" (Judges 5:7). In the same song she was "the most rewarded of women in who live in tents." (Judges 5:24).

Biblical language can be confusing when on one hand Israel is compared to a prostitute (female) but on the other hand victory is given unto not one but the hands of two women. Neither Deborah nor Jael was considered to be weak females according to the text, but the opposite seems to be the case as scripture did refer to Gideon as hiding in the wine press when he was called by the Lord. The point is that the language and description of Israel being a prostitute are derogatory to the actions of the women who obeyed God.

The Crucifixion and Resurrection

No greater insight into Jesus' equal treatment of women can be gained than through the women's role in His death and resurrection. From the cross, Jesus noticed His mother Mary with John the apostle. Not wanting to leave His mother without support, "He said to His mother "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home." (John 19:26-27).

Jesus left a disciple in charge of his mother. To leave her alone would leave her uncovered and unprotected. Jesus showed "honor and respect" for his mother which included all women, especially of that day when it was uncommon.[42]

Luke tells readers that the same women that supported Jesus through His ministry watched His death on the cross from a distance (Luke 23:49). Then they followed and saw the tomb where the body lay. Still seeking to serve, they left to prepare spices for His burial after the Sabbath. They were also the first ones to arrive at the tomb where the body lay. Although frightened by the scene at the tomb, they heard the news of Jesus' resurrection from the angels and ran to tell the disciples.

What an important job for women, considered by their culture to be insignificant and inept. As if this were not enough to give women significance, Jesus also appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:14–18). In those days, women were not allowed to be witnesses in a legal proceeding. Why would Jesus use females as the first witnesses to the resurrection? He valued them as partners with men in the kingdom. Women need to be educated on their importance to God and to society.

Back before the slave revolts, black people only heard the scripture from a white man's perspective. The white man said that if a slave did not obey his master he was not a good slave and punishment was necessary. Slave owners used Scripture to back up their personal beliefs. Slaves were no doubt convinced by the preachers' words that many did not rebel against or try to escape oppression. But from white a perspective, it resulted in

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[42] Ruth Tucker, *Christian Odyssey Magazine*, Jesus and Women, http://www.gci.org//jesus/women, November, 25, 2013.

continuous oppression of blacks which caused many not to be able to establish their own identities Blacks were treated inhumanly and like property.

The same treatment took place in the Old Testament with women. They were treated as property and devalued if they could not have children. Their husbands had the right to do whatever they wanted to them if they were dissatisfied. Anyone can take scripture and turn it around to mean exactly what they choose. That is called selective reading. It is interpreted from one's own agenda. . The word mestizaje surfaced in liberation theology. Even though it was used with the Mexican Americans this word is significant for all who are being liberated. This word meant that Mexican Americans were neither accepted as Mexican or American. This came down to an identification process. In Liberation Theology it is important to have one's own identity. Reading about Feminist Theology, Womanist Theology, Latin Theology, Black Theology, Homosexual Theology, it is all about studying one's identity and knowing who a person is in Christ. In any theology that is part of the struggle.

Women who are abused are deeply devoted to their significant other and the order of the day is to please him. When things go wrong, the abused start to question themselves, relinquish their rights. The longer one stays in abusive situations the harder it becomes to leave. The woman's power and self-respect is given over to someone else. When that power is relinquished the abuse is allowed to continue and all of who they are and hope to become gets lost.

Womanist Theology

Womanist Theology is the Liberation Theology of African American Women. A termed coined by Alice Walker. She came up with the terminology in a book she wrote called, *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens.* For African American Women, according to Stephanie Mitchem, they had to come through many struggles dealing with self-identification. It was extremely hard for black women to define who they were. Black women have come through low self-esteem issues.

In the book, *Introducing Womanist Theology,* by Stephanie Y. Mitchem gives the example of what is called the "Southern Bell" in the Scarlett O'Hara character. [43] It deals with character assignation of black women. It gives a clear view of how black women were depicted as being ladies. If black women did not have a personal sense of being, they were considered undervalued. The value of the black woman was at an all-time low. The women were raped by the white men who did not face consequences. They would leave their wives in the house and procure a slave girl to meet their needs.

Black woman were not considered pretty if they were dark skinned with nappy hair. Their hair had to be straight. Black women had and are still having to gain the respect of those in their communities and churches. Even though abuse is not color coded or held to one ethnic group, origin or religion, African American women have had to prove themselves more than any other race in history. Black women have fought for and are continuing to fight for validation, humanization, and acceptance from those they love, society, and communities. Those who are abused can be taken out of their situation, but

[43] Stephanie Y. Mitchem, *Introducing Womanist Theology,* (Orbis, Maryknoll, 2002), 8.

they must have their thinking changed to be fully liberated. Only the word of God can truly make that difference.

In 1973 the National Black Feminist organization was formed in New York.[44] Both theologies; Womanist and Feminist dealt with,

> . . . the changing of rights on religious grounds as well as reproductive rights, bodily integrity on religious grounds, moral agency, ability to determine their own likes, violence against women in the home . . . around the world, abolishing death dealing structures. . . language of hate. . .[45]

African American women were being discriminated against from both sides of the ethnic fence. Black Liberation was more for the African American male, and the Feminist movement was for the middle class white woman. They had no voice. Seemingly, each group catered to their own needs, just not the black woman. The Black Feminist Movement gave women the edge they needed to begin to change societal thoughts and behavior against the black woman. Over the years, the Black Feminist Movement has sought to change;

> . . . religion . . . equal rights in religion; access to sacred power; centuries of exclusion from ordination; reproductive rights and the rights of differently abled wo/men;. . . moral agency and personal authority to determine their own lives; violence of wo/men in the home; imperialist exploitation of wo/men around the world. . . other forms of wo/men oppression.[46]

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[44] *But Some of Us Are Brave: A History of Black Feminism In the United States,* http://www.mit.edu/~thistle/v9/9.01/6blackf.html. April 9, 2014, 5:30 p.m.

[45] Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza: *Transforming Vision: Exploration In Feminist The*logy,* (Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2011) pg. 27.

[46] Ibid, 27

Feminist Theology, Black Feminist Theology and Womanist Theology are extremely important to this thesis for several reasons; The White Feminist Movement started in the late 1800's addressing freedom for the middle class white women. This gave rise to the Womanist Theology which gave voice to the African American female. Today, there is the Black Feminist Movement which addresses the oppression of black women in religion as well as law. Important women of the Black Feminist Movement are Patricia Hall Collins who has authored such writings as, *Black Feminist Thought; Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment.* and Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race, and Class.*

What is important is what God has to say about the position of the woman. God set the standard in the very first book and chapter of the Bible. Through many centuries negativism has been the core for patriarchal and societal standards that have caused the ill treatment of females in society. Women are still being denied many of the same rights and treatment as men. Feminist Theology challenges our society to rethink the scriptures. Society must focus on Biblical truths instead of truth based on personal agenda; therefore this thesis is better based on Feminist Theology. God gave women a place from the beginning of time.

God and Female Imagery

Womanhood is a powerful image given to females by the Creator. Joyce Hollyday said,

> "Wisdom (in the Greek, *Sophia*) is God personified in the feminine. She is the beloved daughter who existed at the creation of the world, appearing

> later in the form of the Holy Spirit. In ancient traditions, wisdom was viewed as the daughter of the sun god, embodying divine justice. So, from the very beginning, feminine energy came "clothed with the sun."[47]

It is very clear that the writers of the Old Testament were male. The way God was seen in their eyes was from a male perspective. Many times God's attributes had female references. One such Scripture is (Isaiah 46:3-4) which states:

> Harken unto men, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, that have been borne by me from their birth, that have been carried from the womb; and even to old age I am he, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you; I have and I will bear; yea I will carry, and will deliver.

The female or motherly imagery was there, but, patriarchs used the word Father, or male to depict their concept of God. It is hard to believe after this research that God meant for man to take femininity out of the reigns of the Bible. The Lord is pictured here as a pregnant mother who has carried her child in her womb. One who will continue to carry her children through whatever situations arise.

In the New Testament Jesus made it very clear that salvation or liberation was not a gender issue. First of all, Jesus used women to portray the news of the resurrection to the disciples. The woman caught in adultery in the Book of John was not destroyed. It was the exact opposite. Jesus forgave her, reached down in the sand and began to write. No one knows what Jesus wrote but it was powerful enough that it caused others to put their stones down. The Lord never considered it a crime to talk to women others had cast out. Jesus held to the fact that the work of the Lord was not gender related but grace is extended to all humanity. Without the death of Jesus both male and female would be lost.

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[47] Joyce Hollyday, *Clothed With the Sun: Biblical Women Social Justice & Us,* (Westminister John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 1994), Introduction xii. This references (Proverbs 8:1, 22-30, 35).

Conclusion

From the patriarchal era to this present age, society or the church has to take their places behind God when it comes to equality. Reviewing the text of the Gospels clearly demonstrates that Jesus considered women equal with men, even those beyond the bounds of Israel. Jesus demonstrated regards for women by healing their physical and spiritual needs. The Lord acted upon their faith to heal, bring salvation, and deliver from demons. Joseph A. Johnson declares, "Jesus, the Liberator, is the power of God, the wisdom of God and the Love of God."[48]

Jesus overturned cultural taboos to state women's human worth and dignity. God cared deeply about their emotions and life's hurts. Jesus unconditionally accepted women's worship and confirmed their worth in his Lordship. By sharing life's experiences with women, Jesus showed women how to live lives that pleased God. In those same experiences, Christ showed males that the sin in their own hearts could be cured by the same salvation.

Is there a time in the life of a woman today that is not represented in Christ interactions with women in the Gospels? No. In every way, women can follow the example of women in the Gospels in relationships with Jesus. Women today need to remember that Jesus is still the "most dynamically liberating force" in our lives.[49]

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[48] John Butler and Harry S. Stout, "Religion in American History: A Reader", *Jesus: The Liberator, ed.* Joseph a. Johnson, Jr. (Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 2008), 488.

[49] K.H. Cox, *Holman Christian Standard Bible: Harmony of the Gospels,* (Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, 2007), 307.

Dorothy Sayers, who was a British writer in 1947, wrote an article entitles, *Are Women Human,* suggested,

> Perhaps it is no wonder that women were the first at the Cradle and the last at the Cross. They had never known a man like this Man—there never has been another. A prophet and teacher who never nagged at them, never flattered or coaxed or patronized; who never made arch jokes about them, never treated them as 'the women, God help us' or 'the ladies, God bless them!'; who rebuked without querulousness and praised without condescension; who took their arguments seriously; who never mapped out their sphere for them, never urged them to be feminine or jeered at them for being female; who had no axe to grind and no uneasy male dignity to defend; who took them as he found them and was completely unself-conscious.[50]

This statement is an important statement on behalf of feminism. Even though she never considered herself a feminist, but a theologian, she gives insight on both biological and cultural reflection dealing with women and men.

Historical

Past history has a lot to say about the devaluing of women. Have the attitudes and mistreatment of women by men and society changed or do females still live in a gender biased society? From the Patriarchal period to Aristotle's philosophical thinking, to the Women's Suffrage and the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Amendment, laws have constantly changed for the better. In order to understand the trajectory of thinking from then to now an examination of facts must take place.

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[50] Dorothy L. Spears, *Are Women Human? Penetrating, sensible, and witty essays on the role of women in society,* (William B. Erdman's Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1971) 68.

Patriarchal Period

The mindset of males toward females in the time of Abram and the Patriarchs was very different from modern day thinking. Even so, some thought patterns are a derivative of patriarchal thought. The laws were mandated by males and women were excluded. "The word Patriarchy presents problems of its' own. It implies a universal and historical form of oppression . . . By focusing on the rearing of children . . . it suggests there is a single determining cause of women's subordination."[51] Women were for their childbearing purposes. If the Patriarchal laws could detain women I the homes, the men could politic without interruption.

Women have experienced brokenness in many ways from the Hebrew content of the Bible to the modern-day Twenty-first Century. The argument then becomes; is brokenness of women influenced by the patriarchal culture and if so, is that culture a modern day continuum? Gender biases are evident in the Old Testament. The Hebrew or patriarchal society was male oriented. The female status in Hebrew society was a direct result of the women's status in the family. The very word patriarch cast the shadow of male domination. Women could be thrown out, cast aside, raped, and sacrificed, especially if they were not under the protection of their fathers, brother, husbands, or elders.

It is a historical fact according to Old Testament stories such as Abram and Sarah, Lot and his daughters, and the Levites concubine that there were laws that protected men only. According to history, it was the law of the land that male guests were protected

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[51] Carol Smart, *The Ties That Bind: Law, Marriage, and the Reproduction of Patriarchal Relations*, (Routledge Press, NY, NY, 2013), 6.

before the daughters of the home. In modern day society a man is not obligated to such protection laws. Again, in Old Testament culture, women were, in many ways, owned and bound by a male domination. In Biblical days women were the property of their fathers and when the father died, the women became the property of their brothers. Women were not allowed the same rights as men. Men could divorce women, but women could not divorce men without consequences. For many years women did not have a voice, not even to vote. The ideal place for the woman was in the house cooking, cleaning, and conceiving.

Alice Bach suggests "Women do not fight back, they do not try to get away, indeed the women's struggles and pain are not narrated. Women even the violated ones, are as silent, compliant, as uninvolved as the narrator understands them to be."[52] She also states for a woman raped is not a crime against her, but the males.[53]

History has slowly turned for the betterment of women. Many times in the courtroom evidence gets turned around and lawyers allege provocative action on the part of the female. It is disturbing when it happens because women mentally convince themselves that they are to blame. Yet, in Hebrew times, Lot agreed to allow his daughters to be gang raped by handing his daughters over to the men of Sodom and Gomorrah. Not a word was spoken on the daughter's behalf against their father. The laws of Judaism gave males the right to decide what to do with their females. These laws were made and enforced by males. As with other stories about women, women were not asked what they wanted to

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[52]Alice Bach, *Women In the Hebrew Bible: A Reader*, (Routledge: New York and London, 1999) 394.

[53] Ibid, 394.

do, but, they were subjugated to men forcing them to be gang raped to protect the household name. There seemed to be little concern for what God had intended in the creation of equality. The only difference God made in men and women was not that one was greater than the other, but for procreation.

The Age of Aristotle

Aristotle's personal concept of women was very derogatory. His philosophy in early Western thought was that women were beneath men in many ways. He devalued females in theory by gender identity or polarity.[54] At that time in history was considered to be the Aristotelian Revolution. He had four major concepts of women compared to men. They were; (1) woman contrary to and privation of man; (2) woman passive in relation to man (meaning she was cold, infertile, deformed while man was hot fertile, perfectly formed and contributes soul; (3) woman irrational in relation to man; (4) women unequal friend of man; men were to rule and women were to obey.[55]

Aristotle considered the female gender to be weaker, not as smart, and in many ways could not exist if it were not for man. While other philosophers argued against him, he stood his ground on sexual polarity. Aristotle's argument was that male and female were total opposites. Therefore, if they were opposites they should be treated differently. He felt as though man was the "movement and shape for the female."[56] The total concept

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[54] Sister Prudence Allen, R.S.M., *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution, 750 B.C. – A.D. 1250,* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids/Cambridge, 1997). 83.

[55] Sister Prudence Allen, R.S.M., 84

[56] Ibid 90

of his thinking was that women were lower, less than, and of less value than men. Aristotle wanted other philosophers to see that men had everything and women lacked all things. With this kind of thinking prevalent on the planet, it is no wonder that some men would continue to think women beneath them. Those same thoughts have continued into our generation. Until some things are understood researched, people have no valid idea of why their thought processes are the way they are. Many religions have accepted the Aristotelian theory and persist in separation mode in their worship and treatment of female companions.

It is good that not all men felt the need to bash femaleness and find it necessary to focus on their maleness and their alpha roles in society. Some men feel the need to elevate the women in their lives and treat them as equal. Unfortunately in Aristotle's theory, he stood by the fact that women were to obey and men were to rule which brought relevance to his theory of sex polarity.

Women's Suffrage

Suffrage is defined as the "act of voting in an election."[57] In the 1800's, especially after the Civil War, laws did not change for women. Women were still under the lordship of their husbands. Instead of gaining rights, some rights were taken away. Stipulations were put into practice that stated "only the women with property could

[57] Kerri Logan Hollihan, *Rightfully Ours: How Women Won the Vote*, (Chicago Review Press, Inc., Chicago, Il., 2012), 9.

vote."[58] Regardless of the law, women still could not vote and had a limited voice. In 1831 out of a population of more than 2.6 million people, only 4,500 men were able to vote because of large quantities of land they possessed.[59] Husbands continued to rule. The American system was extremely unjust. One of the main laws women struggled against was the marriage law. With this particular law the woman had no sense of self.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was one of the pioneers of the Women's Suffrage movement. She was born in 1815 when women had very few rights. During her lifetime, she also wrote the first *Women's Bible*. Elizabeth Stanton argued that the Bible upheld patriarchal views. She set out to prove that "in Feminist Theology the Bible is an object of both criticism and identification."[60]

The part of her life that seemed to shape her drive for equality, were the actions of her father. He was a lawyer during Stanton's early years. When women came to him for help about the actions of their husbands he would declare "there was nothing he could do…. because the law was the law."[61] The women, sometimes with children, were left broke and homeless. Early in her life, Stanton felt the laws were biased and women paid the price of inequality. By the time she reached her adult years she was zealous in the Feminist and Suffrage movement that started a major change for women in society.

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[58] Anne Kamma, I*f You Lived When Women Won Their Rights,* (Scholastic Inc., New York, 2006) 12.

[59] Molly Housego and Neil R. Storey, *The Women's Suffrage Movement,* (Shire Publications Ltd, Midland House, West Way, Botley, Oxford, United Kingdom, 2012),. 4.

[60]Fahlbusch, Erwin and Geoffrey William Bromiley, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*. (William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, Leiden, Netherlands, Brill, 1999-2003).

[61]Anne Kamma, *If You Lived When Women Won Their Rights*, (Scholastic Inc., New York, 2006). 26.

During the World Antislavery Convention that was held in London women were not allowed to vote, speak, or sit in the same section as the men. Therefore, Lucretia Mott, who was a Quaker, met Elizabeth Stanton in New York which helped to birth the Seneca Falls Convention for women's rights and slavery. The Seneca Falls Convention convened July 19-20, 1848. These women were firm believers that God's Word and laws were not only for men, but for women as well. Cady Stanton and others felt as though men had discredited women enough, especially through Scripture. Through this struggle the National Women's Suffrage Association (NWSA) was formed and headed by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. "A second organization named The American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) was formed by Lucy Stone, her husband; Henry Blackwell, Mary Livermore, and others. They both pushed for the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment."[62]

Elizabeth Stanton included five major injustices that needed attention. First: "women have no voice in their government."[63] She felt that if women were going to live in the same society and be governed by the same set of rules as men, then not only should men have a voice but women also. The same rights should apply to each individual. The second issue addressed was "colleges were closed to women."[64] Education was held to double standards. Girls were encouraged not to attend school. They were told that education was for boys only. Though both males and females went to elementary school,

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[62] Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, *One Woman One Vote: Rediscovering the Woman's Suffrage Movement,* (New Sage Press and Educational Film Company, Troutdale, OR., 1995), 9.

[63] Anne Kamma, 28.

[64] Ibid 34.

only the males were encouraged to go to high school. It was only in the early 1820's that women were able to go to college. Emma Willard was the founder of Troy Female Seminary located in New York City. Willard was the first female to attend school. Mary Lyon founded Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts in 1837. Soon afterwards other places of higher learning admitted females in the United States.[65]

Stanton's next issue was, "women have no rights to their children."[66] If the husband and wife were to separate or divorce the man could keep the children and not let the mother visit them. If her husband allowed it she could visit and spend time with her children, but only at his convenience. Fourth, "women's husbands took their property and wages."[67] This law seemed definitely Patriarchal in nature. If the women worked, even at home, the husbands could keep the wages and disperse of the wages as it pleased him.

In 1839 Mississippi became the first state to pass the Married Woman's Property Act.[68] If the wife had inherited property, the husband could handle it without any input from the wife. The last major law addressed was "men kept all the high paying jobs for themselves."[69] Even today sexism is still relevant. Women have not quite reached the stage where they are making the same money as males, even when performing the same job there is discrepancy. Everything a woman incurred was related to her husband

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[65] Information complied by E. Susan Barber, *One Hundred Years Toward Suffrage: An Overview.* (http://lcweb2loc.gov/ammem/naw/nawstime.html. 10/16/2012, 3:30 p.m.

[66] Anne Kamma, 34.

[67] Ibid 34.

[68] E. Susan Barber, http://lcweb2loc.gov/ammem/naw/nawstime.html. October 16, 2012, p.m.

[69] Anne Kamma, 34.

including her personal possessions. The husbands controlled everything about the wife; her thoughts, actions, even the clothes she wore.

Elizabeth Stanton along with many others was extremely vocal in their beliefs that equality should extended. During the Declaration of Sentiments, she gave a speech entitled, *Solitude of Self,* before Congress that entails the five injustices she addressed.

> To throw obstacles in the way of a complete education is like putting out the eyes; to deny the rights of property, like cutting off the hands. To deny political equality is to rob the ostracized of all self-respect of credit in the market place; of recompense in the world of work, of a voice among those who make and administer the law; a choice in the jury before whom they are tried, and in the judge who decides their punishment.[70]

To the surprise of the men and women campaigning for equal rights, the votes of the people turned out to be unanimous. Some of the women received repercussions from their spouses and even some women, but none-the-less, the Seneca Falls Convention changed the trajectory of women's rights forever. Unfortunately Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth, along with many others died before the laws came to fruition.

In 1906, after the death of Elizabeth Stanton, Susan Anthony, Alice Paul continued the fight for equality for women. The court system denied women the right to their children."[71] Regardless of the family laws that were passed, fathers still had custody of the children." Ballots for women had been won in only four states because the men felt

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[70] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Solitude of Self*, Women's Rights National Historical Park, http://www.nps.gov/wori/historculture/solitude-of-self.htm. December 6, 2012, 11:47 a.m.

[71] Mary Walton, *A Woman's Crusade: Alice Paul and the Battle for the Ballot,* (Palgrave MacMillian, New York, NY, 2010), 4.

it would distract the women from what they needed to be doing at home.[72] The men did not want their women to forget their inside jobs, therefore to keep them oppressed, they kept them home.

Alice Paul would not give up the fight for equality; she became more innovative in strategy. She convinced women to fight by petitioning, and listening to articulate speeches from other women. During some of the picketing against the government, she and other women were arrested. While in jail, they went on hunger strikes, physically abused, and some of the women were put in mental institutions by their husbands. None the less, Alice Paul was determined to get the laws changed.[73] "Alice Paul became an activist along with Lucy Burns and left the National American Women's Suffrage Association to organize the Congressional Union and later the National Women's party."[74]

Amendments

Blacks and both black and white women fought against the Fourteenth Amendment in 1869. The Amendment did not give equal rights to all people. Elizabeth Cady Stanton along with Susan B. Anthony formed the American Equal Rights

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[72] Ibid 4.

[73] Katherine A. Adams, Micheal L. Keene, *Alice Paul and the American Suffrage Campaign*, (University of Illinois Press, Chicago, Ill., 2008), 246.

[74] Kerri Logan Hollihan, *Rightfully Ours: How Women Won The Vote*, (Chicago Review Press, Inc. Chiicago, Ill., 2012). ix.

Association which led to another movement called the National Woman Suffrage Association. Many states, in addition to New York followed.

The Fourteenth Amendment had to be ratified by Fifteenth Amendment."[75] The Fifteenth Amendment gave an extension to former slaves and women. This movement was later ratified by the Nineteenth Amendment.[76] The Nineteenth Amendment was passed in passed June 4, 1919 and ratified on August 18, 1920 which gave everyone equal voting rights. It was only after Elizabeth Stanton died that voting rights for women were legalized.[77] The women received equal voting rights. Those who were fighting for equal rights for women and blacks would not give up the fight until congress was moving in the right direction for change. It was the abolishment of slavery that encouraged the post-war feminist movement.

The feminist movement was reinforced by making political rights a national issue which caused a shift in the women's rights movement. Black Suffrage benefited Women's Suffrage, but not immediately . . .[78] The Women's Suffrage Amendment passed fully in 1919 when a Joint Resolution was passed. Although the National Women's Suffrage Association won, the association folded but gave birth to other movements. It was not until 1965 that blacks gained the right to vote. Within those

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[75] Charters of Freedom, A New World Is At Hand, http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/charters_freedom_13.html. January, 14, 2014, 10:00 a.m.

[76] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Solitude of Self,* Women's Rights National Historical Park: http://www.nps.gov/wori/historculture/solitude-of-self.htm . December 6, 2012, 11:47 a.m.

[77] *Teaching With Documents: Woman Suffrage and the 19th Amendment,* http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/woman-suffrage/ratification-html. January 14, 2014.

[78] Ellen Carol DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of Independent Women's Movement In America 1848-1869*, (Cornwell University Press, Ithica, NY, 1978), 54-55.

movements many changes continued for the equality of all people regardless of gender or race.

Patriarchal times have passed. There were very little or no ethical laws for females. Ethics were not in high demand. Today, ethical laws sustain society. "Ethics is about doing the right thing when there is a sacrifice to be made . . . overriding self-interest in favor of preserving order in our society."[79] Where there was no voice of the slave or concubine, there are many voices now. Through the years groups of men and women have come together to combat the age old issue of abuse and misogyny whether it is male or female. Not all issues of abuse are just women. In modern day society, there are female and male issues because of same-sex relationships. Abuse leaves God's people broken regardless of gender.

Real love means vulnerability on both sides. More times than it should vulnerability is taken for granted and abusers use it against their significant other. Women are raped not only physically, but also mentally and spiritually at times by those who are familiar to them and other times by strangers. Regardless of how hurt comes, the end results are brokenness. When people are not whole, they do not function wholly.

Summary

The twenty-first century laws have dramatically changed from antiquity. Men or women cannot escape punishment for crimes of abuse and rape if they are caught and identified. Unfortunately, not only women are being abused and raped but men are as

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[79] Donald L. Carper, John A. McKinsey, *Understanding the Law,* (South-Western Cengage Learning, Sixth -Edition, Mason, OH, 2010), 22.

well. During Old Testament periods men were protected from sexual abuse. Now there are many programs available for women in such cases. Society has moved from total male orientation to equal rights for women. Even though there are still parts of the world that insist on women not walking beside their spouses, but behind them.

Women have voices in the midst of turmoil. Those who have gone through degrading periods have helped create safe havens for those going through abuses, rapes, and other forms of battering leading to brokenness whether mental or physical. Out of needs for support, organizations have been created and laws have been established.

On the woman's part, the worse stand she can take is to be silent. Silence never solves crimes but speaking out does. One must learn that silence allows the abuser to continue as if it is all right. No one wants to be a continual victim but wants to become victorious in spite of the circumstances. Therefore, people must be equipped with information to speak out against such cruelty in modern society. Women no longer need be marginalized in society but should be counted as a continual part of it.

St. Augustine of Hippo was quoted saying, "Hope has two beautiful daughters; their names are Anger and Courage. Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that they do not remain as they are."[80] Anger and courage must work together to bring about change. Society needs to be angry over systems that do not work, have the courage to admit it, and continue to work towards change.

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[80] Robert McAfee Brown, *Spirituality and Liberation: Overcoming the Great Fallacy* (Westminister Press, Louisville, 1988), 136.

Looking at any story of abuse or rape in the Bible should allow society to envision laws that were unequal and unjust. The unjust laws did not work then and will not work now. Laws have taken major steps since Old Testament behavior. There was nowhere for Hagar to run. Women had to endure oppression, knowing the law was on the side of the male. Men could do as they pleased and wear the brand of hero instead of abuser. Laws have changed and new laws are continuously created to give women the right to safety, ownership, and a right to be whole. According to Rory Dicker, The Feminist movement has been compared to a wave.

> The wave is a metaphor for describing how social change occurs. One way is by intense activity, and the other is by which certain aspects of life are transformed, then . . . reaction sets in. If vital issues remain unresolved another wave of activism arises. While women have not received equal rights, not all rights are respected.[81]

While it is true that national laws have changed, women's rights continuously need to be reinforced. The laws are written down on paper, but not in the hearts and minds of some. There will always be a necessity to fight for equal rights for women, especially the African American woman. Once one wave ends, another begins.

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[81] Rory C. Dicker, *A History of U.S. Feminism*, (Seal Press, Berkley, CA, 2008), 5.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLGY

Introduction

Many women travel through life with issues leading to brokenness. Most of the time there seems to be no one to unlock the door of their spiritual prisons; therefore, women just sit in the corner of their cell imprisoned by negative thoughts and emotions with no hope of release. The church needs to create ministries that are targeted toward females who are emotionally traumatized. Therefore, the purpose of this project is to guide the participants through structured sessions that can lead them towards emotional and spiritual wholeness.

The Context of Study

This study was conducted at Reeves Temple AME Zion Church. This has been the researcher's context for six years. Since serving in this context, the researcher observed several emotional unbalanced young women in the church. When these women spoke, they made negative statements about themselves. Some are satisfied with their looks. The attitude was being passed to their children, male and female. This was due to a vast amount of hurt they experienced. The women are affected spiritually, mentally, and physically.

More than eighty percent of the congregation is females that have divorced, remarried, and divorced again. Some of the women have unmarried adult children. It is evident to the researcher that a special ministry needs to be fashioned. Therefore, this ministry model, "Project W.A.R: Women Arising Restored Journeying From Brokenness to Wholeness, is designed to help meet the needs.

Participant Selection

The researcher chose younger women from Reeves Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, who have experienced hurt through abuse from parents, peers, or significant others or: relational issues such as marriage, divorce, or broken relationship. The researcher chose women that were experiencing emotions of anger, unforgiveness, and shame. All of these areas in their lives have contributed to their brokenness which led to low self-esteem.

The researcher met on three occasions with the women to inform them of the nature of the project. The researcher suggested only those who felt comfortable and could retain confidential information should volunteer. One week later the participants were asked to meet with the researcher again to finalize the count. Out of nine only six volunteered. On the starting day of the sessions only five attended. Four of the promised participants decided against doing the research. The participants were given a start date. The researcher began and ended the study with five participants.

Research Method

The method used for data collection was qualitative. The collected information was based on "activities carried out in close proximity to a local setting for a sustained period of time."[1] The Likert (pronounced "Lick-ert") Scale was the best fit for this particular process. It was created by Rensis Likert (1903-1981), who was a social scientist and it is used most for psychological assumptions."[2] The survey questions will be summed with a calculated mean score. The researcher felt this was best to test whether or not the hypothesis was positive or negative. The Likert scale was created to measure the opinions and attitudes of those who participated in the project. This test called for pre-coded responses.

A Likert-type Scale based survey was given to each participant using a scale value of one-five; 1: Never; 2: Almost Never; 3: Slightly; 4: Almost Always; 5: Always. The group was asked to respond to questions related to their personal experiences and perceptions of themselves.

The next process consists of observation of participants in the group setting and journaling. The researcher paid close attention to body language and shared emotions. The researcher is encouraging truth from the group and make sure the participants do not

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[1]Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, *An Expanded Sourcebook: Qualitative Data Analysis, Second Edition,* (SAGE Publication International Educational and Professional Publisher, Thousand Oaks, London, 1994), 9.

[2] Dana S. Dunn, *Research Methods for Social Psychology, 2nd ed.,*: (Wiley and Sons, Hoboken, NJ, 2009), 155.

say or act based on what they think the researcher wants to hear and see. Participant discussion is a key factor in determining individual and group progress.

The form was explained and each participant will be asked to sign the consent form voluntarily. This is done so that each person feels confident that information would not be exposed outside the context. The researcher added that identification of the participants would not be allowed. They would only be referenced to as participants.

Imagery

The researcher used imagery in the beginning and end of each session to encourage the participants enter into a deeper state of self-exploration. Kathleen Fischer, the author of, *Women at the Well: Feminist Perspectives on Spiritual Direction,* says, "Moreover, symbols and images operate proverbially and prerationally. They provided access to levels of experience deeper than, but not yet able to formulate in, clear concepts."[3] Looking at images can have a positive and a negative effect. It forces the participant to release past hurts and disappointments that could linger past the sessions. The idea is to get the participants to allow their feeling to surface, face their issues that will hopefully lead to positive changes.

Dr. Martin L. Rossman, author of *Guided Imagery for Self Healings,* discusses the use of imagery as a vital process for healing from the inside out. In the forward, Dr. Deon Ormish discusses how imagery use can be positive.

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[3] Kathleen Fisher, *Women At The Well,* (Paulist Press, New York, Mahwah, 1988), 10.

He states, "Imagery helps insight turn into action."[4] Imagery helps the past to surface and allows people to move toward solutions.

Journaling

Journaling was incorporated to allow the participants to pen their feelings. James W. Pennebaker, MD, professor of Psychology at the University of Texas, Austin and Joshua Smyth, PhD. Associate Professor of Psychology at North Dakota State University conducted a study in 1999 when they found that journaling helps release stresses and increases problem solving. After the person writes and reviews what has been written, the individual gets a better perspective on problems and issues.[5] Helen Cepero, states in her book, *Journaling As A Spiritual Practice: Encountering God Through Attentive Writing,* that "one of the best gifts of a journal is that it gives you a place to show up."[6] Journaling helps people come face to face with themselves. It gives the individual time to reflect on where they have come from and focus on where they want to be. Journaling helps people move to the next stage in healing.

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[4] Martin L. Rossman, MD, *Guided Imagery For Self-Healing: An Essential Resorurce For Anyone Seeking Wellness,* (New World Library, Novato, California, 2000). Forward, ix.

[5]http://apt.rcpsych.org/content/11/5/338.full December 15, 2013.

[6]Helen Cepero, *Journaling As A Spiritual Practice: Encountering God Through Attentive Writing,* InterVarsity Press, Wisconsin, 2008). 32.

Guided Bible Study

Each session will include a directed Bible study pertaining to specific topics. The Bible helps to make sense out of bad situations. God understands the mental, spiritual, and physical part of His children. Studying the Bible gives direction and encouragement. It also helps one find purpose and understanding for life. For everything God's people feel, Jesus has already felt. Since God made humankind, God allows humankind to know God's heart through the Word. The scripture selections were chosen to help bring balance, illumination, and spiritual healing.

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication was used as a tool for acknowledging emotions. Dr. Pennebaker discussed the power and benefits of verbal communications in his book. suggests that the healthiest people talk thereby, acknowledging their emotions and insist on looking forward to the future.[7]

Each participant was given a specified amount of time to describe their feelings on presented subjects. Dr. James Pennebaker submits when a person continuously internalizes their thoughts that it "undermines the body's defenses."[8] As a result of internalization the person can become ill because the immune system breaks down. The body then becomes susceptible to sickness.

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[7] James W. Pennebaker, *Opening Up the Healing Power of Expressed Emotions,* (Guilford Press, New York, New York, 1990), 203.

[8] Ibid. Pennebaker, 1.

The Hypothesis

The hypothesis is designed to evaluate two concepts by the use of the Likert Scale:

1. Will directed sessions benefit participants by guided studies in the increase of self-esteem, self-love, and wholeness, with the use of imagery, journaling, verbal communications, Bible study, and prayer?

2. Will there be a noticeable change (whether positive or negative) in the participants overall attitudes of themselves and their relationship to Christ and the Church as a result of the guided sessions?

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

Session one of Project W.A.R. started Monday, May 20, 2013 from 7:00 p.m. and ended at 8:30 p.m. at Reeves Temple AME Zion Church in Davidson, NC. There were five female participants in attendance. The facilitator greeted everyone. The program and procedure was explained to the group. Each participant was informed of the importance of the confidentiality agreement. Each person was asked to sign a confidentiality form. They were advised that this was completely a voluntary study. The participants all agreed and signed the form. Afterwards, the group prayed together and the sessions began.

A survey was given to each participant. (SEE APPENDIX B) The Likert -like Scale was used. This scale measures attitude on a rated scale from 1 – 5 which will organize data in value. There was a set of fifteen statements. Each participant was asked to circle the number that best related to them. The survey questionnaire took approximately fifteen minutes. After each participant completed the questionnaire the facilitator moved to the next phase of the session and each participant was given a New Women's Bible, composition book for journaling, and a pen.

The researcher gave the participants instructions with an outline for the evening. Each group member was given a mirror, which was intentionally broken and cracked. They were asked to look into the mirror and observe the image they saw of

themselves for five minutes. (SEE APPENDIX D, IMAGE 1) The researcher noticed many facial expressions. Three participants immediately began to weep. One participant began to laugh and another was completely silent not knowing what to think or do.

It was interesting to the researcher to observe the mood in the room. Even though some were crying; although not loudly, but with tears streaming down their faces, the researcher tried not to let it affect her. After five minutes the participants were asked to lay the mirrors down and journal their feelings for five minutes. As they were journaling, their emotions engulfed the room. It was very sad to see and hear the sniffling from the crying. The researcher was touched emotionally, yet the researcher actually knew what it felt like to be in a position such as theirs.

After journaling, the facilitator asked each participant to describe her feelings. The description of their emotions was almost too much to bear. Each participant told how she viewed herself in the broken mirror. Many of their hearts were broken and their spirits seemed to be ripped apart by core circumstances in their lives. The emotional trauma the participants felt as they talked was deep seated. The facilitator gave each participant five minutes to express their feelings. Some actually went over a few minutes but it was worth the time.

Participant #2 actually laughed and made gestures at herself as she glanced in the mirror. She was asked to verbally describe what she saw and she replied "I see a joke." She did not want to converse about it in the beginning, but, before the end of the night she literally belted out her frustrations. Again, the room became extremely intense.

One participant saw herself as a four year old girl who was traumatized when the man she thought was her father bluntly told her he was not. She was devastated and began to weep as if she were that child of four years old. The researcher wanted to embrace her but thought it best to let her feel that pain in order to get through it. She cried the entire session. When the session was over everybody embraced her.

Another participant, who is a lesbian female, described her feelings, with no understanding of why she is a lesbian because no one else in her family participates in a lesbian lifestyle. She began to sob because she noted that she made some of the same mistakes as her father. The participant's father abandoned her when she was a child. From the researcher's point of view and observance this participant tried extensively not to allow anyone in the group in her space. After being her pastor for six years the researcher partially knew her story. The researcher finally noted the trust issues she faced. She wanted to be the one to analyze everyone else without telling her story. The researcher had to explain to her that it was not her place to analyze or give advice but, we are all here to listen.

Another participant described how her father abused her mother. Her mother was extremely hurt and emotionally destroyed. She recounted how her mother took her and her younger sister to a mall and abandoned them. This participant expressed her feelings towards everything that happened between her parents. She felt that she and her sister were the root cause. The hurt in her eyes revealed her hearts deepest pain of being abandoned and not understanding why.

Another Participant shared how her mother and father separated and she never recovered from it. Her father never acknowledged her. She continuously said she could forgive him, but did not want to do so. She commented on how her mother labeled her to be the black sheep of the family. She cried uncontrollably. This participant is always very quiet, shy, and reserved. If she is not spoken to she does not speak. When she began to speak she cried hard and literally grasped for breath.

Each participant was asked to write the name(s) of people they needed to forgive. They were given a few minutes to think about the name(s) of the individual(s). Afterwards the facilitator asked each participant to write this sentence and finish it, "I don't want to forgive (?), name(s) because (?). Each participant wrote in her journal for five minutes.

The Researcher then asked each participant to open her Bible, which were provided. The scripture was taken from Matthew 18: 21-35, The Unforgiving Servant. Each participant took part in reading the scripture. After the scripture was read there was a discussion on the importance of forgiveness and its benefits for them. Forgiveness is not always easy but it is necessary according to the scripture lesson. The facilitator explained the necessity of forgiveness and its' benefits for them. The discussion lasted approximately twenty minutes. The scriptures expressed in order to be forgiven, one must forgive.

At the end of the session the facilitator and the participants held hands and prayed. A bond was created between the Even after the prayer the participants literally wept and embraced each other. Everyone finally departed. After all, the participants had

just begun to do something they had never done, and that was come face to face with their inner feelings.

Session II

The second session began Monday, June 3, 2013, 7-9 p.m. This session covered the Loss of Relationships and Abandonment. The facilitator reminded the participants of the importance of the signed confidentiality agreement. Afterwards the facilitator proceeded into the session, opening with prayer. (SEE APPENDIX C, SESSION II)

The subject for the evening was "Broken Relationships". Each participant was given an image, not knowing what it was and were asked to turn it over together. The image was that of a heart, (SEE APPENDIX D, IMAGE 1). They were each instructed to look at the heart for several minutes and afterwards journal their feelings. Immediately some of the participants were overwhelmed and began to cry. Several of them would not focus on the image because it seemed painful. To see emotions so high was almost more than the facilitator could bear. After the time limit was reached, each participant was asked to journal their feelings for five minutes. Several of them took longer because they were intense in their writings. Finally, everyone stopped. (Do not put time limits on journaling or maybe allow extra time depending on when the majority is finished). Three of them could have kept writing. They seemed to be engulfed by their feelings.

The group began to articulate their emotions. Each was given a specific time limit. Session II was as intense as the first session. Each one shared a story of broken relationships and how they were left emotionally drained. They described how their relationships ended and what they longed for during the relationships. There were many

questions as to why the breakups happened to them; where they went wrong. Several of the participants had children involved which made it harder to bear. One participant felt she was not like the others because she only had three relationships in her life. She longed for her husband to tell her he loved her and how beautiful she was instead of giving her gifts all the time. As a result she began entertaining another man on the phone. She stated it was only for attention. The facilitator explained to her she was no different from the others. In many ways she is suffering from brokenness even though she sleeps with her husband every night. She is longing for something she is not getting from him which is causing her to entertain compliments and attention from other men.

It is interesting how women can feel their situation is atypical, but yet, when it comes down to it there is very little difference. Note, this was the same one who laughed at herself in the broken mirror. The researcher made the statement "one can be in a room with a thousand people and still feel alone." This was made in reference to her feeling alone at home, even though she has a family.

It was an interesting night for one participant, who is a Lesbian. She tried to hide her feelings as if she had never been hurt by anyone. She tried extremely hard to wonder how everyone else could allow such things to happen to them. Finally, she broke and began to share her story. It was amazing to hear another woman talk about her ex-girlfriend. She gave so much of herself and but the lover took advantage of her. Regardless of whether it is a heterosexual or homosexual relationship there is no difference in hurt. Hurt does not discriminate because of sexual preference, creed, race, or color. She was reluctant to talk about her hurt. At this point she almost clammed up.

Yet, when she was reminded that the researcher knew of her relationship and with whom she was intimate and the level of their relationship, the participant became more at ease. She began to discuss how the one she loved had cheated on her with a man and the agony it caused her. She verbalized why she was a lesbian; and it was not because of ill-treatment. She chose her lifestyle because she wanted to treat women better than she saw men treat women. This participant wanted them to know their self-worth. She wanted to encourage the other four participants by her experience. None-the-less, her feelings of abandonment of her significant other was real.

In the next phase of the session each participant had to finish a sentence and write out the remaining answer. The group then began the Bible Study for the next twenty minutes. The scripture text was Psalm 55 which gave the account of David's broken relationship with his son, Absalom. It described David's emotions and, how he wanted to run away. David wanted to go to a place of peace, but yet he wanted to see his enemies destroyed. He displayed anger, questioned and wanted God to avenge him. David went from complaining to remembering who God was in the midst of his circumstances. He began to trust God completely for his deliverance.

The facilitator explained the scriptures. The question was asked that each person describe how the text dealt with them personally. They thought it was beyond them how a scripture written so long ago could relate to their situations. David explained he could have taken hurt or disappointment from someone he did not know, but what he was going through came from a best friend, a family member, someone close to him. The participants did not understand at that point that David was talking about his very own

son who was trying to take his throne. The participants began to cry because they were thinking about how much of themselves they had put into their relationships only to be hurt by the ones they loved most. The researcher pondered on the familiarity of that pain.

The facilitator encouraged the participants to do as David did and trust God. God has a chosen path for all God's children. God must be allowed to heal the brokenhearted. The researcher did some soul searching to see if she fully allowed God to heal her abandonment issues with father, and husband. There certainly was a big void in her life as a result of it.

The participants were given an image of a quote. (SEE APPENDIX D, IMAGE 2) The participants cited the quote together. During the discussion, some of the participants doubted it would ever be easy for them to move on. Three of them had been out of their relationships a few years. The researcher explained to the women about having a broken leg. At first it hurts, it is disjointed, and because it is broken, it is hard to walk. A cast is put on it and one is told not to put too much pressure on it. After about six weeks, the cast comes off. The limp goes away. A person never forgets which leg was broken; they just do not walk with the limp anymore. One cannot let a broken past determine how she walks in the future. One knows she has been hurt, but she does not have the limp anymore.

Session III

Session three began Monday, June 10, 2013; 7-9 p.m. The subject for the evening was Self-Esteem. The researcher opened with prayer. The group wanted to talk about

lessons learned from previous sessions. The group spent fifteen minutes conversing as to how the sessions helped them overcome some of what they had faced during the week. The participants made comments on the fact that they never have been involved in these type sessions. They asked if the sessions could continue after the research was over. (The comment was made, "don't leave us hanging, we need this.") The researcher learned that this model of ministry is needed in every church, not just the black church. Again, hurt does not discriminate against age, race, creed, color, ethnicity, or religious affiliation. (SEE APPENDIX C, SESSION III)

All participants were given an image of someone with low self-esteem that also contained writings. (SEE APPENDIX D, SESSION III, IMAGE 1) Afterwards they were given five minutes to journal their feelings. The researcher found the facial expressions and body movement as they were writing to be very interesting. Three of the participants were crying, one had the look of anger, and one even laughed (negatively). The researcher had the same opportunity to read the sayings on the image. She thought to herself how many of those sayings were her at one point in her life. The researcher shared with the women how she dealt with low self-esteem in her first marriage. At one time during the session, the researcher thought how far she had come. There were times the researcher would do just about anything to be accepted because she felt as if she was not good enough to be accepted on her own worth. The participants needed to know they could receive healing if they opened themselves up to it.

Each participant shared her feelings. The participants had become very comfortable with each other which made sharing easier. Out of the five participants only

participant one had a positive attitude. As a matter-of-fact, she told the other four participants they had no clue of how special they really were and they did not understand their self-worth. Two of the participants found it hard to love themselves. Both were called names and criticized by family and peers for looking a certain way. The researcher commended the one participant for her strong words of encouragement.

One of the participants is very heavy, but she is beautiful and intelligent. She got a lot of negative feedback from her peers. She refuses to wear dresses, but wears dark pants most of the time. She does not appreciate her body, therefore, she hides it. The researcher explained to her as long as she was neat and clean (and she is); she should be proud of who she is and what she has become and is still becoming.

The researcher remembers when she was in school how her peers jeered at her and called her names. The researcher explained to the group what it felt like. She explained how she thought she would never get through that point in her life. Then to add injury to insult, the love of her life beat her and cursed at her which increased the pain. As time passed, that part of the researcher's life was left behind but, not without a struggle.

The group studied Genesis 1:27, Psalm 139:14, and Jeremiah 29:11 These scriptures painted spiritual and mental picture of how much God loves us as women and how much women are valued in God's eyes. Questions were designed by the presenter that related to the Scriptures which were read. The discussion lasted approximately 20 minutes. The group was surprised at some of the scriptures because the verses were

unfamiliar to them. One participant asked the question, "How can a book written thousands of years ago still be relevant for today?"

Each participant was given a second image (positive) that they reflected on for five minutes. (SEE APPENDIX D, SESSION III, IMAGE 2) The group wrote and discussed the image. It was always imperative to the researcher that each session closed with positive reflections. The image was of a black female who exemplified self-confidence and strength.

Each participant was then asked to write a prayer for God to help them maintain a healthy mental and spiritual vision of themselves. They asked God to remind them of their worth and purpose. In this entire session the researcher understood their feelings. She coached them through their tears and reminded them every day is a new day. As long as the Lord is kept in view change is guaranteed to come.

The session closed with prayer.

Session 1V

Monday, June 17, 2013; 7-8:45 p.m., the session began with prayer. The subject for the evening was Abuse. The participants were given an image to reflect on for five minutes. (SEE APPENDIX D, SESSION IV, IMAGE 1) The image was a three part picture of a man abusing a woman. Just for the researcher alone the picture was very disturbing. Abuse takes shape in many ways through physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual. Each participant related to this image. Some had previously talked about verbal abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse. They were startled at the image.

Participants were asked to journal their feelings for five minutes. Some of the participants were very uneasy. One seemed to have very little emotion. The researcher's guess is that this one had never experienced abuse at least not that way. Three of them began to cry and one looked confused. From previous sessions there was more time needed in the journaling and it was still being allotted.

The conversation after the journaling was interesting. One participant basically had no expression. She had never been in a relationship dealing with abuse. She openly conversed about her relationship with women and how she did not want to see anyone abused or hurt. This participant voiced her opinion to the fact that women do not have to let men treat them cruelly. The truth was this participant had previously dealt with abuse. None-the-less she did not understand. It was amazing how much respect this participant had for the others. She wanted them to know they did not have to go through that kind of treatment. What this participant did not want to tell is how her girlfriend's friend brutally attacked her, but she gave details of that incident. The researcher was proud of her.

Each participant verbally expressed her emotions and talked about the reaction to her abuse by spouses, uncles, and cousins. A few of them were told the abuse was ok because they were family. One went as far as to meet face to face with her culprit and ask him why he raped her. As she expressed herself she began to cry. One of her first questions was "what did I do to deserve that?"

To break the mood in the room the researcher asked the participants to write down the name of the person(s) that abused them and how the abuse made them feel. Every

now and then, the researcher had to do something to break intense moods in the room or the group would have remained in those emotions to long.

The scripture Lesson for the evening was presented which was Psalm 91:1-16. Questions were then discussed by the group and how the lesson pertained to them. Afterwards, the participants were given a more positive image to view. (SEE APPENDIX D, SESSION IV, IMAGE 2) The image was of a woman who wrapped her arms around herself. The group spoke of self-love, strength, and courage.

They were directed to write a prayer releasing their abuser(s) and asking God to help them focus on loving themselves after abuse. The session was closed with prayer.

Session V

Monday July 1, 2013, 7 p.m. – 8:45; the session topic was Wholeness and Completion in Christ. Before the session began, the participants wanted to discuss some of the conversation from the previous session. Fifteen minutes was allotted for this discussion. It is good to know that these sessions are already making a difference in their lives. The females talked comfortably of her feelings, which is amazing. The researcher knew this is was a project, but these are real people with real issues.

The session began with prayer. The topic of wholeness should have been saved for the final session, but since the researcher did not realize that, the session went on as planned. (SEE APPENDIX C, SESSION V) The end result needing to be reached was complete wholeness which includes the total person.

First on the agenda was to view an image that represented total balance. (SEE APPENDIX D, SESSION V, IMAGE 1) The emotions of the participants were more joyful from the last session. By this time the participants were on a more positive track. The purpose for this image was to let them see if there was going to be completeness as they must work towards balance. In most of the other sessions there was an outburst of tears because of the pain and agony some had experienced. This session started off peacefully and calmly. Facial expressions changed from tense to a sigh of relief. Their faces were intense because the participants were eager to learn how to obtain that balance.

Approximately five to seven minutes passed before the researcher finally brought an end to the focus of the image. The participants were encouraged to journal for five minutes. This did not appear to be much of a struggle. It was interesting because they were writing and thinking about how they would accomplish this sort of peace and balance in their lives. From the previous sessions when they were writing, the researcher could not help but to feel the pain and agony circulating through the room. The atmosphere during this session was definitely more calm and relaxed.

When the participants had finished writing, they were asked how the image affected them. The conversation began with one of the participants questioning how are they were to accomplish balance. She is the mother of three and never been married. She is in school and all three children are in school, with the oldest one in college. She wanted to let go of the fact that her family thought she would never accomplish much since she had all her children out of wedlock. She was a lot calmer than she had been

previously, but she still cried. She was happy to prove her family wrong, which was that she could accomplish something positive in her life. She did express only having several more weeks to finish school. She was excited and thought she could do better at balancing once she was finished with school.

The other participants asked questions pertaining to balance. They knew they had to first become happy with who they were and whose they were. These participants all come to church on a regular basis except one participant. They understood the concept of balance. One of the participants talked about her everyday life, work, being married, and children, cooking, and taking care of grandchildren. She inquired about finding balance. The researcher explained to them from her perspective the balance in body, mind, and spirit does not come in a day, but it a constant struggle. The participants discussed prioritizing and putting life in the right perspective.

The Bible study for the evening was Colossians 2:9-10 "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority." The researcher directed the group study. The group discussed why the Bible study lesson was so important to them. The researcher let the participants know that according to the Word of God all, not just some, are complete or whole in God through Christ. An interesting question was asked if God is male can 'he' be trusted. The researcher asked the same question at one point in her life. The explanation was given that God is a spirit. God is neither male nor female. God can be trusted. Just as God is a father, God is also mother, friend, and protector.

The group was given another image to examine. (SEE APPENDIX D, SESSION V, IMAGE 2) It was a quote on being complete in Christ. The group dialogued on the saying. It was reassuring to them that nobody else really needed to validate them except Christ. One participant said to the group "you need to know who you are." It goes back to loving yourself and God. People can do what they want but it is really how the individual feels about it. These women are phenomenal in the researchers' eyes.

Session VI

The last session took place on Monday July 8, 2013; 7-9:45 p.m. The session opened with prayer. (SEE APPENDIX C, OUTLINE VI) The topic for the evening was, Changed Though Patterns; Changed Life. The participants were given an image of a clear vase full of dead flowers. (SEE APPENDIX D, SESSION VI, IMAGE 1) The participants were asked to focus on the image for five minutes. The response was overwhelming. The facilitator learned in this session that most of the participants allowed wrong thinking to be a motivating force in their lives. The facilitator has found it to be factual that people's actions are cradled by the way they think. If someone feels worthless negative actions will follow.

One participant gazed at the clear vase of dead flowers and gave an astonishing inner self-evaluation. The participant felt as though the clear vase represented people being able to see through her. She showed only a slight amount of self-love. This person felt as though others could see she did not appreciate herself. The participants assured her she was intelligent, beautiful, and she possessed excellent parenting skills. This particular

female expressed from the first session with the broken mirror that she did not look at herself in the mirror because she did not like what she saw.

Some of the other participants saw the flowers in the vase as having weak stems, no life, dried up, and withered, as if someone left them to die. Instead of seeing death as the optimal scenario, one participant said she saw the possibility of life even in death. This participant saw the dead flowers as a sign of freedom. This was extremely disturbing to the facilitator. Red flags were raised in the facilitator as well as the others. They immediately reached out to her and found she had thoughts of suicide.

After listening to this participant's story, suicide certainly could have been an easy way out. The facilitator explained there is only one life on this side and God intends for us to live it to the fullest. Regardless of any physical, mental, or spiritual landslides, life is worth digging oneself out of the mud.

It was the intent of the facilitator to wait until the end of the session to show the second flower image. Seeing that the mood in the room was dark and gloomy, the facilitator turned to the second image. This image (See Appendix) was a single flower with reflected light. The flower had a long leaf behind it with also a reflection of light. The mood certainly turned around. The facilitator followed the same procedure as with the first image. The participants reflected upon the image for approximately five minutes, followed by journaling for five minute.

After journaling, our second discussion began. This image caused the reaction as the facilitator had hoped. The room was charged with positive energy. The participants expressed how they immediately saw strength in the stem which helped the flower to

stand up and out in an extraordinary way. Their thinking was changed from negative to positive. The participants commented on the light beaming over the flower. The light represented to some moving forward towards freedom, relief, new life, and peace. The leaf behind the flower was referred to as a place of rest; a bed. The light represented an array of hope even in the midst of darkness. Even though the picture itself was black and white, the light seemed to have leaped from the page into their hearts.

The facilitator introduced the Bible study entitled Thoughts. The Scriptures study was Romans 12:2. The discussion consisted of ways to adapt to better thought patterns according to the scriptures. To possess a new mind one must learn to possess new attitudes and new ideals. A new mind comes through studying God's word and finding out God's plan for this life. It was reiterated through Proverbs 23:7, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. The participants began to understand the power of thoughts. The participants agreed that if Satan can destroy the thoughts, Satan can destroy the life.

Tonight as the sessions came to a close each participant was asked to think back over the six weeks and write down the names of people who hurt them, regardless of who it was. The researcher explained that the group was to have a RIP ceremony. The ceremony consists of digging a hole outside in the dirt and placing within it all the names and hurts. The group then lit a match and the papers were allowed to burn to ash. Believe it or not, some of the papers almost refused to burn. They had to be lit several times. After they were completely burned, each participant took her turn to covering the ash with dirt. The beauty of the night was the moment the dirt was put over the hole, the church bell from Davidson College rang nine times. It was amazing.

The group cried and began to hug each other. Then we all held hands, sang Thank You Lord, and finally ended in prayer. This was truly amazing and beyond the researchers expectations.

Data Analysis and Findings

While brokenness cannot be measured, the depth of how one views and values themselves can be measured. A 15-item scale will be used to measures the depth of each participants view of themselves. The ratings are on a 1to 5 Likert type response scale. The questions will be separated into five sets of three questions. The three questions will be summed and given a mean score. Also there will be a summary from visual observation of participants, along with written information from the participants.

The first set of questions dealt with negative self- love; #1 – I love myself; #10 – I understand the core of my brokenness; and #11 – Loving myself is easy. In this set of questions the score should be high. The most that could be rated in each set of questions was fifteen. The higher the variable in this case determines a higher self-esteem. A lower score reveals poor self-love. The Pre-Survey was summed together as was the Post-Survey. These scores were given a mean score (or average). The summation of the Pre- and Post- test scores are represented by the S. The means is given which is the average of each score from the Pre and Post-test. The score is calculated by deducting the (post-test) – (the pretest) which will show either a loss or gain.

40% had high ratings with 10% having low ratings. Participant #1 showed an increase after the post-test. Participant #1 had a gain of 3.0 which is excellent.
This showed that from the six sessions done by the researcher there was an increase in the knowledge of why they should love themselves.

Participant #1 showed in increase in her self-love not only by numbers but by her conversation at the end of the project. Group discussions according to this participant caused her to see herself in a different light. She stated she was important and worthy of love. She thought at some point in her life she had something to do with all that was done to her. Therefore, she felt better. The other 40% had excellent self-love according to their scores with positive gains that ranged from .03-1.3. (SEE APPENDIX E, TABLE 1)

These second set of questions were asked because people who are broken and are experiencing low self-esteem do not trust their own decisions or anyone else's. Questions #9 – God can be trusted in my circumstances; #13 – I don't trust anyone because of my past; #15 – I trust my decisions; were grouped together. The score for this set of questions needed to be high. (SEE APPENDIX E, TABLE 2) After the six week sessions, the average was higher. In the post survey 40% of the participant's scores were rated higher for trusting their own decisions and God. 10% of the group had a low score. The participant with the lowest score was rectified because the variable increased by 9 points and the mean was a gain of 4. The participants showed an increase of knowledge with six weeks of sessions.

The third set of questions; #3 – I am experiencing feelings of bitterness.; #4 – I harbor unforgiveness in my heart; #6 – I am angry at the person(s) who abused me dealt

with bitterness, unforgiveness and anger. Bitterness has downfalls such as; (1) bitterness damages your relationship with God; (2) it alienates you from other people; (3) bitterness detours you from your best self.[1] The participants were shown through discussions how detrimental bitterness is to their overall being and relationships to God. There was a noticeable change from the pre-survey to the post survey. The pre-survey showed 40% of the participants had trouble with bitterness and 10% almost never. While the post-survey showed an interesting discovery that 30% stayed the same, 20% of the groups bitterness increased. (SEE APPENDIX E, TABLE 3)[2]

The fourth set of questions dealt with guilt and intimidation; #2 – Feelings of guilt are common in me; #8 – Other people intimidate me; #12 – I have more confidence in my others than I do in myself. The scores for this set should be low numbers such as 7 and below. The scoring was from (1-5) with (5) being highest. Anything above 7.5 shows high guilt and intimidation levels and very low confidence. As noticed in the table, 30% of the participants scored very high showing no change in the post-test while 20% scored less than 7. (SEE APPENDIX E, TABLE 4)

The fifth set of questions; # 5 – I feel depressed; #7 – I am fearful; #14 – Change is necessary but fear makes it difficult; dealt with fear .The scores for this set of questions should be low numbers. The pre-test percentile was as follows: 40% of the participants had total scores of 12 to 15 (15 being the highest). 10 % had a total number of 6 which was excellent. The mean score ranged from 5 - 2.

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[1] Jack Zavada, 3 Reasons to Avoid Bitterness: Staying Free from Bitterness as a Single Christian, about.com/od/singles resources/a/avoidbitterness.htm., October 14, 2013.

[2] http://easycalculation.com/statistics/mean-median-mode.php. December 6, 2013, 3:00 p.m.

The post-test shows a slight decrease in numbers. A lower number indicates an increase of knowledge. The scores for the post-test ranged from 4 – 14. 100% (5 participants) showed a decline in numbers. The mean score ranged from 1.3 – 4.6. This indicates there was an increase in knowledge. (SEE APPENDIX E, TABLE 5)

Comments on Personal Growth

Along with statistical results were the participant's comments. The Participants felt the program was a success. In the comments below the participants speak of their own personal growth. The statistics showed an increase but, more than that, it is important to show how the participants viewed themselves from the six week sessions.

> **Participant #1**: "I found out a lot about myself by participating in the sessions. Telling my story out loud was very helpful. By opening up I was able to release so much mess that I had been holding on to for years. Looking in the cracked mirror was so scary for me. I didn't really look at myself at all in the mirror. To have to do that was hard. I saw nothing at first just me, then it got a little easier the longer we had to stare. I am still working on looking at ME! By this time I knew that the more I dug deep into my feelings the more I could release "stuff" by the end of the group session. I can say I have really grown and am still growing."

> **Participant #2**: "I was facing a lot of anger issues at some of my family members, especially my father who said he was not my father. I have learned that forgiveness is for me not the other person. For many years I thought if I did not hang around them, or call them everything would be fine, but it was not. I am learning in order to be forgiven I have to forgive. I learned that God loves me for who I am and I am valuable to God. I have grown in many ways. My hope is we continue these sessions. The images were incredible. I did not know images could stimulate emotions so deeply. I appreciated them and grew from the experience."

> **Participant #3**: Being a Lesbian female I did not want to share my story even though all of us were raised together except one. Even though they knew me I did not know how they would accept me. I realize my struggles were related to their struggles. I did not know God loved me as much as

we were being taught. Some of the problems I could not relate but, on the other hand the biggest majority, I fit. I am thankful for the sessions. I am working on my commitment to my church because I feel more comfortable than I did.

Participant #4: "It is amazing for me to know that others are going through the same things you are. I released a lot of issues I had been holding onto for years. A lot of tears were shed because of years of pain but, it was good for me to have shed them because I know I'm getting better. I learned more than I can express. I am not ready to stop. We have talked about continuing our sessions. Thank you Rev. Hall for all you did and do."

Participant #5: "These sessions helped me to be with women who were like me. Even though I am married I was looking for attention because I felt my husband didn't appreciate me. I had trust issues. I realized because of my past I had low self-esteem. These sessions put me on a path to realize who I am in Christ and my validity to Christ. One of my biggest issues was forgiveness. I had to forgive people in my past. Through prayer and the studies I feel like I am on the right path."

The Hypothesis hold true that if emotions women are going through could be taught, they would gain a better understanding of themselves, their families, and will cause a greater commitment to Christ and the church.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTIONS, RECCOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSION

Reflections

The purpose of this study was to determine if women's ministries located within the church will be useful in helping women who have been broken can obtain wholeness through guided Bible study, and teachings. If so, would this allow the participants to have better relationships in the church, at home, in everyday life, and a higher self-love?

One of the major evaluations for the researcher is simple but true. Change takes time. On the pre-test as opposed to the post-test were some variables that changed drastically and some did not change at all. The researcher did not get discouraged because some self-evaluations did not change. It only shows that there needs to be more teaching in those areas. Lesson plans need to be developed that target the weaker areas for a longer length of time. Where the researcher only had six weeks to complete the study, one of my recommendations are to adjust the sessions from six weeks to a monthly ministry.

There were those in the group that the researcher would recommend to professional counseling. When there are talks of suicide, the problem goes deeper than the person is willing to expose.

Ministers should never be ashamed of referring someone to seek help outside the minister with another Christian counselor. Pastors are should feel obligated to obtain a list of resources or recommendations for those times

Recommendations

The researcher recommends that a women's ministry should be created in the local church. In doing so, those women who are hurting will have a place to release problems and relate to each other, knowing they are not alone. The researcher recommends that instead of a six week program that this ministry should continue on a monthly basis. Brokenness does not occur because of one incident and neither does wholeness come in a day. Healing, growing, and building positive self-esteem takes time and commitment. The local churches must be committed to creating ministries that will aide in the process of journeying towards wholeness for the betterment of the female, her family, friends, and the fellowship of the church.

For the researcher, if there had been a better understanding of the oppressions she was going through at the time of her brokenness, she does not think the pastor would have sent her back into such a stressful situation. Because of a lack of training in ministry dealing with abuse and brokenness, the pastor just reminded the researcher of not being able to pastor if she left her situation. There was no sympathy for the victim but there was a reminder of how others would look at the researcher being married and divorced.

This study shows the importance of have ministries in place for those who are facing the same or similar experiences. Women need other women to relate to, feel close

to, and to feel comfortable with. They need someone that can be trusted with their innermost hurts and pain. From this form of ministry, everyone prospers; the church, the family, and the job.

Conclusion

What has been a strong lesson to the researcher is that brokenness can only be measured by the way one feels about oneself. Brokenness causes a downward spiral in the human psyche and the spiritual self. According to Dr. Nathaniel Branden, who is renowned for his study on self-esteem, "Your face, manner, and way of talking and moving will tend naturally to project the pleasure you take in being alive."[1] Dr. Branden also stated in, *Six Pillars of Self-Esteem,* "Self-esteem is a basic need." A need is that which is required for our effective functioning."[2] Many psychologists believe that depression is linked to thoughts of suicide. If a person is going to change brokenness in their lives it is a must to change the thinking process. Dr. Branden stresses in his writings how detrimental it is to allow other people to decide who you are.

The researcher discovered that if women are given the opportunity to learn more of God's word and allow the scriptures to be self-absorbed, they will open the door to complete healing. When one is whole and complete in Christ, life can be seen differently. No longer will the negativity of life be a measuring stick that determines who a person is

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[1] Nathaniel Branden, *How To Raise Your Self-Esteem,* (Bantam Books, New York, 1987), 158.

[2] Nathaniel Branden, *the Six Pillars of Self-Esteem, (*Bantam Books, New York, 1994), 17.

and where they will end up. Only God declares who a person is in Christ. It is that declaration that will give meaning and purpose to one's life. Instead of falling under the pressure of oppression, women can hold on to the strength of the Lord and allow God to define their purpose. Proverbs 31 depicts the power of women; excellent, mighty, strong, full of power, virtue, and ability, strength and dignity, trustworthy and righteous, industrious, secure and committed, and she smiles at the future."[3]

The researcher wants to be that women with the ability to overcome any circumstance in her life which will enable her to authentically minister to other women. Let us as women become focused on whom we are in Christ Jesus and the Lord's will for our lives. There is beauty in brokenness, if we allow God to heal us.

[3] Elyse Fitzpatrick, Carol Cornish, *A Biblical Guide to the Major Issues Women Face: Women Helping Women,* (Harvest House Publishing, Eugene Oregon, 1997), 15.

APPENDIX A

CONSENT PRIVACY FORM

Confidentiality Agreement

This **Confidentiality Agreement** is made **by** and **between**

_____(1st Party)

AND

_____(2nd Party)

_____(3rd Party)

_____(4th Party)

_____(5th Party)

_____(6th Party)

_____(7th Party)

I am willing to participate fully in each session as scheduled. I will respect the other person while speaking. Every journey is different I will therefore, respect and not nullify the other person's pain. I will keep each Group members name and information in the strictest of confidence.

Each who shall be hereafter referred to as "Disclosed Participants"

As of _____, _____

PROJECT REFERENCE

Discussions related to Doctoral Project Thesis

Project W.A.R (Women Arising Restored)
Journeying From Brokenness to Wholeness

APPENDIX B

SURVEY

Project W.A.R.: Women Arising Restored: Journeying Towards Wholeness

SURVEY

Directions: Circle the number from 1 – 5 with 1 being the highest and 5 the lowest that best describes you.

	Always	Sometimes	Slightly	Almost Never	Never
1. I love myself.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Feelings of guilt are common in me.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am experiencing feelings of bitterness.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I harbor unforgiveness in my heart.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I cannot control my depression.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am angry at the person(s) who abused me.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Fearfulness is present everyday.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Other people intimidate me.	1	2	3	4	5
9. God can be trusted in my circumstances.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I understand the core of my brokenness.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Loving myself is easy.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I have more confidence in others than I do myself.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I don't trust anyone because of my past.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Change is necessary but fear makes it difficult.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I trust my decisions.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C

COURSE OUTLINES

Session One

Forgiveness and Anger

Greetings to Participants
Signing of Confidentiality Form
Prayer

Session Begins:

1. Participants Survey (10 min.)

2. Each Participant will focus on an image and journal their feelings. (5 minutes) (SEE APPENDIX D, SESSION I, IMAGE 1)

3. Each individual will share their feelings (5 minutes each)

4. Exercise:

   A. List the names of people who have hurt you in the past.
   B. Write how you feel about that person or persons I don't want to forgive name(s)_____because_____.(10 Min)

5. Scripture study and discussion on Forgiveness; (self and others) and Anger
   Scripture reading: Matthew 18: 21-35

   1. What do you think Jesus meant by "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven?" (21-22)

   2. How does the King show grace in this text? (23)

   3. How can you show grace according to the text?

   4. What are the consequences of not showing grace?

   5. What was the Lord's reaction? (25-27)

   6. What happens when a person does not forgive? (28-34)

   7. Is forgiveness for the other person or for the one forgiving?

   8. What did the Lord command and why? (35)

6. Write out a prayer to God for forgiveness of self and those who hurt you.

7. Closing Prayer

Session Two

Loss of Relationships (Marriage, Divorce, Significant Other, Death)
Letting Go

Opening Prayer

1. Each Participant will look at an image and journal their feelings. (SEE APPENDIX D, SESSION II, IMAGE 1) (5 min.)

2. Each Participant will share their feelings (5 min. each)

    A. Write the name of the person who broke your heart
    B. It made me feel _____ ? (5 min.)

3. Study Scripture Psalm 55:1-8, 12-17 (30 min.)

    1. How does verses 1-2 speak to your heart?

    2. How does v-3 relate to your inner spirit?

    3. Why was the Psalmist hurt?

    4. How does the Psalmist hurt relate to yours?

    5. Was David ever afraid?

    6. Were you afraid when the relationship was falling apart?

    7. David was desperate for answers, have you ever experienced desperation?

    8. What did David want to do in avoiding his problem?

    9. How would you describe David's trust in God?

    10. How will this help your trust in God?

4. Each participant will focus on the second image #2 (SEE APPENDIX D, SESSION II, IMAGE 2) Journal your
feelings.

5. Prayer of Release/Closing Prayer

   A. Lord help me to release_____(name that person(s) so that I may have peace and receive grace. Closing Prayer

Session Three

Self-Esteem

Opening Prayer

I. Each Participant will look at the image. (SEE APPENDIX D, SESSION 111, IMAGE 1), read the writing and Journal your feelings. (5 min.)

II. Each Participant will share their feelings (5 min. each)

A. Finish this sentence

I feel (felt) this way because_____.

III. Study Scripture Genesis, Psalm 139:14 (30 min)

1. Genesis 1:27 "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. . ." (NIV) How do you think God feels about God's creation?

Read Psalm 139:14

2. What two ways does David talk about his existence?

3. What does the first word imply?

4. How does it relate to you?

5. What does the second word imply?

6. How does it relate to you?

7. Does God intend for God's children to feel inadequate?

8. Why or Why not?

Read Jeremiah 29:11

9. What message is Jeremiah sending to those who love God?

10. Should we feel special because God has purposed us to do a specific thing that no one else can fulfill, if so how should that affect our self-worth?

IV. Each participant will focus on image 2. (SEE APPENDIX D, SESSION 111, IMAGE 2) (3 Min)

V. Each participant will journal their feelings

VI. Each participant will discuss their feelings. (1 min. each)

VII. Write a Prayer for God to help you realize your worth and purpose.

Closing Prayer

Session Four

Abuse

I. The session began with prayer.

II. Each participant was given an image to reflect on for five minutes. (SEE APPENDIX D, SESSION IV, IMAGE 1).

III. Participants were asked to journal their feelings for five minutes.

IV. Each participant will verbally express their emotions.

V. Each participant is directed to write the name of their abuser(s) and how the abuser(s) affected them.

VI. Scripture Lesson: Psalm 91:1-16.

A. Discussion Questions

1. The psalmist describes many attributes of God such as a; shelter and a shadow, refuge, fortress, deliverer, shield, and bulwark. Which of names best describe s God in your situation, and why? (1-4)

2. When and if fear grips us, what does the Scripture challenge us to do? (5-7)

3. In abusive situations why do people stay? If you stayed, explain your feelings.

4. What are the promises for God's people in this text? (7, 10-12)

5. The Psalmist was loved by God, do you feel loved?

6. In any given situation the Psalmist reached out to God. What situation have caused you to reach out to God?

7. Five times God declares, "I will. . . deliver. . . set him/her securely . . .answer. . .be with him/her. . .rescue/honor. . . satisfy. . .let him see My salvation. (14-16) In times of trouble, and you need someone to reach down, pull you up, get you out of the quick sands of life, how would these words apply to you

8. Turn to Hebrews 4:14-16, read the text and explain Christ being called High Priest. What did Christ go through to make himself one with humanity?

VII. Afterwards, the participants were given a more positive image to view (SEE APPENDIX D, SESSION IV, IMAGE 2). The image was of a woman who had wrapped her arms around herself.

VIII. The participants will be directed to write a prayer releasing their abuser(s), and ask God to help them focus on loving themselves after abuse.

IX. Closing Prayer

Session V

Wholeness and Completeness in Christ

I. The Session will begin with prayer

II. The Participants will be given an image to view). (3 min.) (SEE APPENDIX D, SESSION V, IMAGE 1)

III. The Participants will journal their feelings. (10 min)

IV. The Participants will express their feelings toward the image. (5 min. each)

V. The Scripture lesson focus is Colossians 2:9-10; "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority."

A. Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to be complete?

2. Is completion possible outside of Christ?

3. Therefore, In Christ there is: no lack, redemption, acceptance, comfort, a guaranteed inheritance, and wisdom.

VI. The Participants will focus on a saying. (3 min.) (SEE APPENDIX D, SESSION V, IMAGE 2)

VII. The Participants will journal their feelings of the image.

VIII. The Participant will discuss their thoughts on the image.

IX. Closing Prayer

Session VI

Thoughts

Prayer
Session Begins:

I. Greetings

II. Each Participant will look at image and journal their feelings. (5 minutes) (SEE APPENDIX D, SESSION VI, IMAGE1)

III. Each individual will share their feelings (5 minutes each)

IV. Scripture study (Amplified Bible)

Romans 12:2 - 2

1. How does this Scripture apply to you?
2. Is there a good and acceptable will of God concerning you as a person?
3. How can we find the will of God for our lives?

Proverbs 23:7a "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he."

4. Are thoughts important?
5. Why or why not?
6. What are your thoughts toward yourself?

1 Corinthians 2:16

7. Should you look to people for validity?
8. Why should close attention be paid to this Scripture?

Mark 10:52, Matthew 9:22, 12:13, 14:36, 15:28

9. What is the definition of healing?

10. From the text does healing mean the same as being whole?

V. Brief thoughts on image #2 (SEE APPENDIX D, SESSION V) **RIP Ceremony**

VI. Write out names of hurts, people, and negative feelings you want to release

Each participant will destroy the names of people and feelings to start a path of free themselves from depression, anger, unforgiveness, bitterness, bad relationships, and the spirit of low self-esteem.

Pray together,

Lord I thank you for all you have done for me. Thank you in advance for transforming my mind so that I may discern your will for my life. If I allow your word to change the way I think then I can change the way I live. I chose to bury feelings of depression, anger, unforgiveness (of myself and others), bitterness, bad relationships, and the spirit of low self-esteem. Your word declares I am fearfully and wonderfully made. There is no other like me. No one can do what you have called me to do and be but me. Help me change the things I can but those that I can't, help me to move on. Help me to bring my thought life under subjection to your word, will, and your way. I am a woman of purpose, peace, and prosperity. Your Word oh Lord makes me whole.

V. Post Survey (10 min.)

IV. Closing Prayer

APPENDIX D

IMAGES

Session I, Image 1

This mirror was broken by the Facilitator (5 mirrors were distributed amongst the group).

Actual Image

Session II, Image 1

http://ipressontowardthegoal.blogspot.com/2010/02/valley-of-brokenness.html. May 2, 2013

Session II, Image 2

http://25dip.com/best-25-self-love-quotes. May 1, 2013

Session III, Image 1

http://youthvoices.net/discussion/how-does-self-esteem-work-teenagers, June 10, 2013

Session III, Image 2

To be beautiful means to be yourself. You don't need to be accepted by others. You need to accept yourself. ~Thich Nhat Hanh

http://www.spiritwire.com/selfesteemquotes.html, June 10, 2013

http://bps-research-digest.blogspot.com/2013/01/self-esteem-is-catching.html. Jun 10, 2013

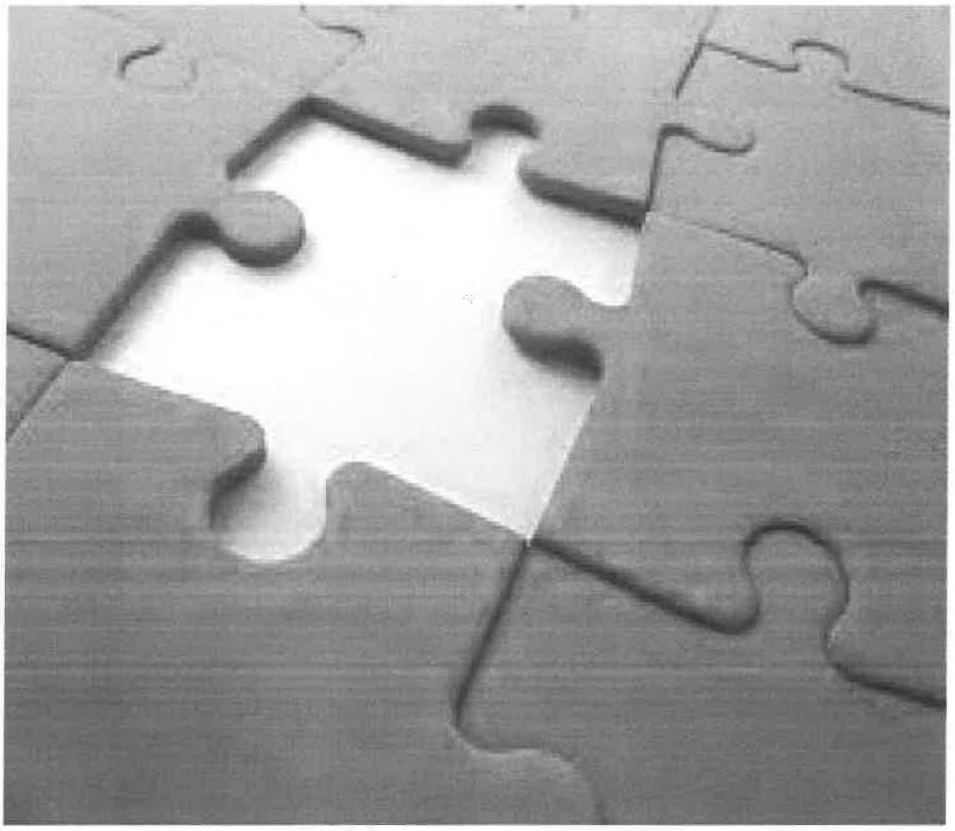
Session IV, Image 1

http://www.sanjeev.net/printads440/s/singapore-domestic-violence-verbal-abuse-7440.jpg June 13, 2013

Session IV, Image 2

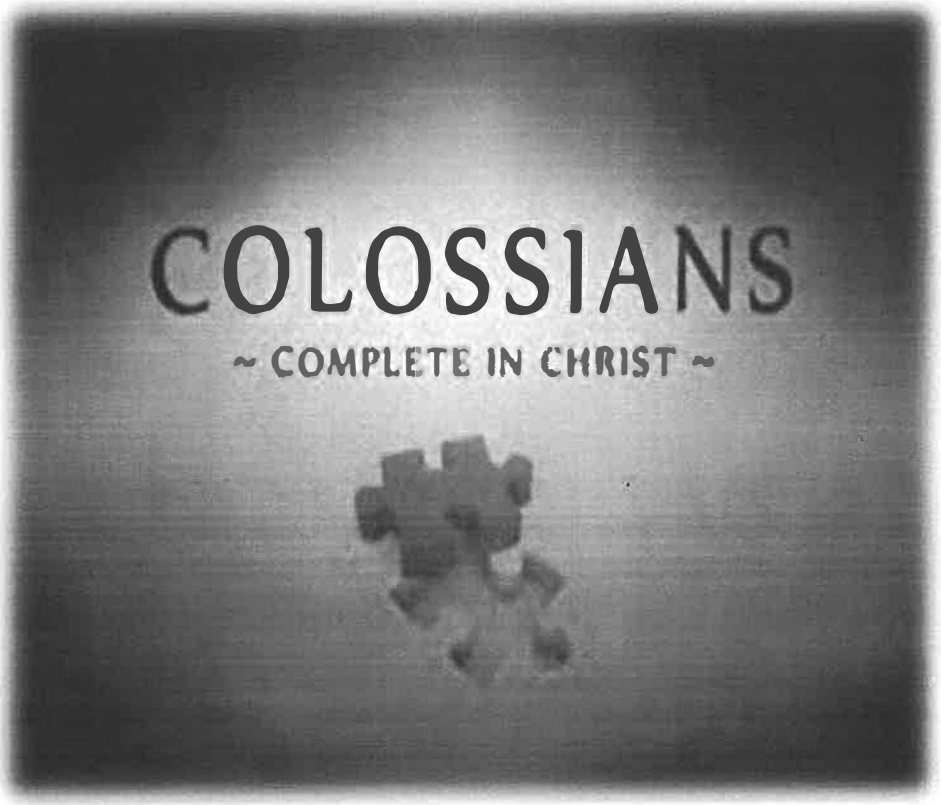
http://wealthyandloved.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/self-love31.jpg?w=248&h=330&crop=1
June 13, 2013

Session V, Image 1



http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_PHHZqwGynuI/TDQMvSjYOVI/AAAAAAAAAog/bdRPnO/NPs/s1600/missing-piece.jpg. May 1, 2013

Session V, Image 2



http://doubwww.jenmazza.comwww.killerwolf365.deviantart.com, May 1, 2013.

Session VI, Image 1

"Dead Roses in Glass"

www.jenmazza.com June 17, 2013

Mauerblümchen (the Hothouse)

http://www.jenmazza.com/site/index.php/newprojects/the-hothouse/

Session VI, Image 2

www.killerwolf365.deviantart.com June 17, 2013

APPENDIX E

TABLES

Table 1

Participant			Pre-T	Post-t	Gain
1	S		4	13	3
	Mean		1.3	4.3	1
2	S		12	13	0.3
	Mean		4	4.3	2
3	S		9	11	0.6
	Mean		3	3.6	1
4	S		14	15	0.3
	Mean		4.7	5	1
5	S		10	13	1.3

Table 2

Participant			Pre-T	Post-t	Gain
1	S		11	12	1
	Mean		3.6	4	0.4
2	S		7	13	5
	Mean		2.3	4.3	2
3	S		11	15	4
	Mean		3.7	5	1.3
4	S		13	13	13
	Mean		4.3	4.3	4.3
5	S		12	12	12

Table 3

Participant			Pre-T	Post-t	Gain
1	S		12	11	-1
	Mean		4	3.67	0.4
2	S		8	5	-3
	Mean		2.67	1.67	-1
3	S		10	10	10
	Mean		3.33	3.33	3.33
4	S		10	5	-5
	Mean		3.33	1.67	-1.66
5	S		14	10	-4
	Mean		4.67	3.33	-1.34

Table 4

Participant			Pre-T	Post-t	Gain
1	S		12	12	12
	Mean		4	4	4
2	S		8	4	-3
	Mean		2.66	1.3	-1
3	S		13	13	10
	Mean		3.33	3.33	3.33
4	S		9	5	-5
	Mean		3.33	1.67	-1.66
5	S		10	10	-4
	Mean		4.67	3.33	-1.34

Table 5

Participant			Pre-T	Post-t	Gain
1	S		15	14	-1
	Mean		5	4.6	0.4
2	S		6	5	-3
	Mean		2	1.67	-1
3	S		10	10	10
	Mean		3.33	3.33	3.33
4	S		10	5	-5
	Mean		3.33	1.67	-1.66
5	S		14	10	-4
	Mean		4.67	3.33	-1.34

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